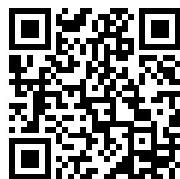

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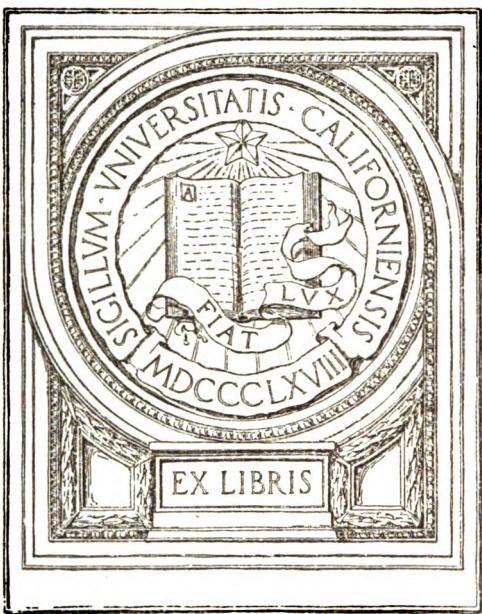
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FORTY YEARS A SOLDIER

A VOLUME OF RECOLLECTIONS
BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR
GEORGE YOUNGHUSBAND
K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E.



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FORTY YEARS A SOLDIER



THE AUTHOR WITH "SEIFTON" AND "TOBY."

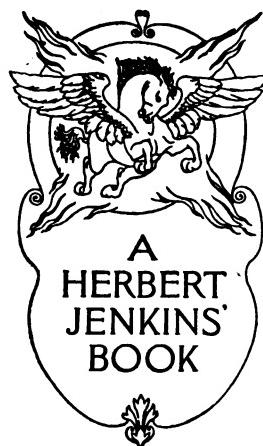
FORTY YEARS A SOLDIER

BY
MAJOR-GENERAL
SIR GEORGE YOUNGHUSBAND
K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E., C.B.
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THE WIND
AND THE WAVE

Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner, Frome and London

To
MY OLD REGIMENT
THE GUIDES

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FOREWORD

AS a matter of fact, this light record is short of forty years, by the margin of ten days. It commences on November 20, 1878, when we advanced to storm Ali Musjid in the Afghan War, and ends, when the bugles sounded the "Cease Fire," on November 11, 1918. Perhaps the reader will forgive this small discrepancy.

G. J. Y.

TOWER OF LONDON.

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FORTY YEARS A SOLDIER

CHAPTER I

A DYNAMIC BEGINNING

ON a bitterly cold morning in November 1878, a very young officer sat huddled up in an army blanket, on top of a curious conveyance, which was galloping in pitch darkness, through a Punjab winter night. The very young officer happened to be myself, and the conveyance was known as a *dâk gharri*.

Everyone knows what a subaltern is, but only the privileged few know what a *dâk gharri* is. A *dâk gharri* is the stage-coach of the East, but it is not in the least like an English coach ; rather does it resemble a large wooden packing case, placed on four wheels. Nor is it drawn by four spanking greys, or bays, in glittering harness ; on the contrary it is drawn by two small, and semi-wild ponies, generally at a full gallop. The said ponies being attached to the vehicle, with harness so ancient that it has to be tied together with bits of string, or old rags. There is a sliding door on each side of the packing case, to allow the passenger to crawl in, and inside he will find a mattress spread. On the roof is roped his baggage, and to this his servant clings for dear life.

The reason that I, a gilded popinjay, came to be on top of this conveyance, was due to a very big thing, as we then thought, the Afghan War of 1878. The railway which now runs to Peshawur, and beyond, then terminated at Jhelum, so that anyone, aiming at the frontier, had to complete the journey by travelling some 200 miles from Jhelum to Peshawur, in a *dâk gharri*. These vehicles and the ponies to draw them being limited in number, the Quartermaster-General had taken over the service, and was forwarding officers in order of urgency, or when the urgency was equal, by seniority.

Now, as I was only just a cadet from Sandhurst, and therefore

had no seniority whatever, and certainly no more urgency than anyone else, it looked as if I might have to spend the war seated in the verandah of the *dāk* bungalow at Jhelum.

Twice a day trains arrived from Lahore, and down country stations, simply bristling with warriors thrusting for the front, and everyone of these was senior to me, and his business quite as urgent. I used to go to the Quartermaster-General's office every few hours to see how my name stood. It did not stand at all, but slid down and down, till at last there was a perfectly colossal column of names above mine. The D.A.Q.M.G., Captain Dillon, I think, was exceedingly nice, and very sympathetic, but orders are orders, so there you are.

One evening after many days, I was sitting late in the verandah, thinking sadly that my career was clouded for ever, that it would never be possible to outlive the opprobrium of having failed to join my regiment before the day of battle. For this campaign, like every subsequent campaign, was to be over in a few weeks, and everyone was in a fever of apprehension lest he should arrive too late. Perhaps some may remember this same feeling in August 1914!

While thus sadly brooding in the dark, there came to me an angel clad in the raiment of an officer of the 9th Lancers. His name was Woods, and we had travelled out together, in the old troopship H.M.S. *Crocodile*. He made a startling proposition.

"Look here, young feller-me-lad, you are here till doomsday, unless something is done about it. Tell you what I'll do. I'll leave my native servant behind, and take you in his place; but you will have to sit on top of the *dāk gharri*, as I and another warrior fill up the inside. Moreover, you can't bring any kit or bedding, 'cos there isn't any room for it. We are starting in five minutes, and as it is quite dark, no one will spot you. If the Staff Officer comes smelling round, to see that the *gharri* is not overloaded, just curl yourself up in a blanket, and cough as if you had the worst brand of asthma, and he'll say to himself, 'That's a nigger safe enough,' and pass on."

One is certainly rather young at eighteen, so without another thought I cast all my worldly possessions, kit, uniform, tent, servant, to the winds, and hastily snatching a blanket, climbed on to the roof of the *gharri*. It will perhaps hardly be grasped by the uninitiated how noble a fellow was Woods, the Vet. of the

9th Lancers. He was an old soldier, or anyway old enough to know, that the chances of ever seeing his servant again were exceedingly remote. He was thus deliberately depriving himself, at the opening of a campaign, of an essential, even more important than a revolver, just to oblige an ugly boy from Sandhurst. He was a noble fellow.

Sure enough, as Woods had predicted, the Staff Officer did come smelling round, and not only smelt, but climbing on to the wheel, inspected the top of the *gharri*. In accordance with orders, concealed in my blanket, I gave vent to some heart-rending asthmatic coughs and wheezes, which evidently moved the Staff Officer deeply, for he was heard to mutter, "Poor devil, he'll be dead at the other end!" He was very nearly right too, for I have never been so nearly frozen stiff as during those two nights on top of that infernal machine.

The procedure, in starting one of these archaic vehicles, varies little. The best ponies are kept for the start, and finish; with the quite comprehensible intention of impressing the Staff Officers, and other interested persons, with the magnificent manner in which the stages are horsed throughout. Even however with one of these selected pairs, it takes a little coaxing to start them. Thus one gentleman, clothed only in a puggri and a loin cloth, will cast a loose rope round one of the ponies' fore-feet, and pull it forward, into the first motion of a gallop. Another lightly clad assistant will do the same by the other pony. Any handy loafers will at the same time tackle on to the wheels, and try to revolve them forward, whilst less strenuous persons push the conveyance from behind.

The coachman on the box, seizing the right moment, comes down smack, whack, on each pony's back, and at the same time shouts at them scandalous remarks touching the chastity of their female relations. Sometimes, especially with the picked teams, everything goes right at the first attempt, the assistants jump nimbly aside, and off you go; but more often the whole process has to be repeated several times.

With the cold grey eye of the Staff Officer on us, or possibly because the ponies did not wish him to hear more of their domestic scandals, we got off at the first attempt, proceeding at a full gallop down a short drive, at the bottom of which was a very sharp left-hand turn. These Jehus, however,

albeit with loose flopping reins, one in each hand, drive exceedingly well. Thus we negotiated safely that corner, at a fiery pace on two wheels, whilst I clung desperately to Woods' kit bag, which happily was securely roped on.

Thus commenced for me a nightmare of a ride, through the dark. It was freezing hard, for India is not all tropical; we were galloping into a biting north wind, straight from the snows of the Himalayas, whilst my only protection was the aforesaid soldier's blanket.

At every 8 or 10 miles are stages, at which the ponies are changed; hardy little fellows about 14 hands high, but often quite untrained, and generally suffering badly from sore backs, girth and collar galls.¹ It was at these stages that I got some relief, and a little warmth, for there was usually a little fire of straw and sticks by the roadside, and also one could get some exercise by helping to push off the conveyance again, and then scrambling on to the roof, as it lurched violently forward. Sleep of course was out of the question, nor was smoking possible, for the wind was too strong.

However, all things must have an end, and towards ten o'clock in the morning we galloped smartly into Rawal Pindi, half of our journey finished. Here unfortunately no change of ponies was available, so we had perforce to wait till evening. This meant another cold night drive for me. But I managed to pick up a *rezai* (native quilted rug), and so travelled on much more comfortably. Next morning, as we passed through Nowshera, the sun began to peep over the horizon, and on the road we came across a most inspiring sight. It was the 11th Bengal Lancers on the march to the front. Few regiments in those days wore khaki, and these fine fellows were in all the bravery of blue and gold and silver, and at their lance heads flew blue and red pennons. It was the best mounted regiment in India in those days, having a horse-breeding farm of its own, started by Sir Dighton Probys, their old, and most famous, leader.

I was so taken up with this entrancing show, as we drove slowly past so as not to give them our dust, that I rather over-exposed myself, quite forgetting what a queer figure I must

¹ It need hardly be mentioned that these conditions no longer generally exist. No finer, or better kept, ponies could later be seen than those on the Simla road.

have cut. A sahib wrapped in an old *rezai*, perched on top of a *dak gharri*! The officers of the 11th were in roars of laughter, and one hospitable fellow shouted up, "Stop and have breakfast with us at the half-way halt." But we had only 24 more miles to cover, so thanking them kindly, we pushed on to Peshawur.

Here all was subdued excitement, and movements of all sorts were going on. This was November 20, 1878, and on that day the reply to the British ultimatum, sent to the Amir of Afghanistan, was due. If it was unfavourable, or did not arrive, it was a case of war. It is not necessary here to go very deeply into the causes of the rupture; suffice it to say, that the Amir had been guilty of studied impoliteness, even falling into the extreme courtesy of stopping, by armed force, a peaceful British Embassy, which under Sir Neville Chamberlain was proceeding to Kabul.

It is never wise to stand studied impertinence, or even the semblance of it, from any Oriental. Politeness, and courtesy, by all means, and even camaraderie, as long as these are reciprocated, and all is fair, and square, and above-board. But the moment there is a sign of revolt, mutiny, or treachery, of which the symptoms not unusually are a swollen head, and a tendency to incivility, it is wise to hit the Oriental straight between the eyes, and to keep on hitting him thus, till he appreciates exactly what he is, and who is who. However, this is wandering off into high politics; let us get back to the junior subaltern.

This particular subaltern had been gazetted as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 1st Battalion 17th Foot, now known to fame as the Leicestershire Regiment. Northumberland is the county of my ancestors, and I myself had rather hankered after the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers, or the 25th King's Own Borderers (as they were then called); but my father, who was a wise old soldier, had sensed this coming Afghan War, and searching the Army List, discovered that the 1st Battalion 17th Foot was at Peshawur, and therefore certainly first for the fray. He therefore procured my appointment to that regiment and battalion.

As it so happened, both the 5th Fusiliers and the 25th K.O.B.'s rolled up for the war, but proud as I should have been to have belonged to either of those splendid regiments, I am prouder still to have belonged to the good old Leicesters. And

that is only right. Whatever one's regiment is, it is the best, not only in the Army, but in the world. This is in fact that particular brand of *esprit de corps* which has made the British Army what it is, and incidentally has extended the British Empire to its present size.

Having been appointed to the 1st Battalion 17th Foot the next thing was to find it, and this appeared to be no mean task. A disreputable-looking youth, in mufti and covered with dust, with no baggage or credentials, is not likely to be a *persona grata* at the Staff Office of an Army just moving into the field. So I kept clear of staff offices, but by great good luck, met on the Mall a soldier who proved to belong to the 17th Foot. From him I learnt that the regiment was in camp, some miles out on the Jamrud road, that is to say the road leading into the Khyber Pass, and so on to Afghanistan.

This looked like business, so after cleaning up as best I could, a *tum-tum* was hired, this being another weird vehicle used in the East. It is like a dilapidated dog-cart, on high thin wheels, with a white cotton canopy over it. Both wheels are usually on the point of coming off at opposite angles, and all the woodwork groans, and rattles, and squeaks. Generally there is only one pony in the shafts, but for long distances a second pony may be attached to a currie bar, and helps the crazy concern along.

The driver generally prefers to sit on the shaft, close up to the splashboard, with his feet dangling. He thus balances the trap, which otherwise has a pronounced tendency to balance over backwards. Such a catastrophe is not uncommon, for any unusual strain will break the pony's belly-band, which is usually in the last stage of decay. Then up go the shafts, over goes the trap, and through the cotton hood the passengers may be observed, hastily emerging, like the ladies through the paper hoops at a circus.

We had however no such misfortunes, and in due course arrived at a large camp. Standing by the roadside was a very pleasant-looking officer, and him we asked where lay the 17th Foot.

"You have hit it off in one," replied the pleasant-looking officer. "This is it."

I explained who I was, and that I had come to join. The pleasant-looking officer proved to be Captain J. H. Gamble

of the 17th Foot, one of the nicest fellows who ever stepped, and a rare good officer too. He, alas ! was one of those who was destined not to return with us, for he sleeps in Afghanistan.

The officers were just sitting down to an early lunch when we arrived at the mess tent. Gamble introduced me to the Colonel, W. D. Thompson, to the Adjutant, J. G. Anderson, and to McPherson, Wiseman, Webb, Boddam, and others who were near by. All were most kind and cordial in their welcome to the last joined sub.

Now I am not saying a word against any other regiment in the world, but I really must say this about the old Leicesters. They had the nicest manners I have ever come across. Some regiments have bad manners, and stick to them, others have moderate manners, but the great majority have excellent manners ; they are officers and gentlemen. But, though I may be biased, I put none before the old Leicesters. It is a pleasure to go into their mess, whoever you may be, and in whatever part of the globe.

Amongst those sitting at lunch were several officers of the 11th Bengal Lancers, Heath, Beatson, and others. I saw them looking curiously at me, and then they asked if I was the chap they had seen on top of a *gharri*. Out came the whole story, and I don't think it did me very much harm. However, lunch is one thing, and wading knee-deep, so to speak, into bloody battles, quite another, for incidentally it was mentioned that in three hours' time, that is at 4 p.m., we were off to do the wade. Quite all right of course for those ready, armed cap-à-pie, and long expecting the joust, but rather a different story for me. I had nothing but what I stood up in, which happened to be a suit of English mufti, and a white *solah topi*, or sun hat. Naturally my soldier's blanket, and venerable *rezai*, had not accompanied me, to make my opening call on the regiment. I confided this deplorable deficiency in my fighting kit to Moir, who was sitting next me. He however took the matter quite coolly, and remarked—

“ Oh ! we'll set you up all right.”

And so they did, those excellent comrades of a few hours. Moir gave me a whole suit of khaki uniform, the Quarter-master produced a pair of putties, the Sergeant-Major conjured from nowhere a tailor-made sword, sheathed in a brilliant steel scabbard, attached to a white belt and slings, and Moir's

orderly, in half an hour, made a khaki bag, which was fitted over my white sun hat. At the last moment Webb's Colour-Sergeant weighed in with a haversack—by no means empty, God bless him !

On the tick of four o'clock p.m., the gallant old 17th Foot marched off on a campaign, which was, as it proved, to last the best part of two years. It was a regiment of veterans, of the pre-Cardwellian days, and it will perhaps emphasise the veteran part of the business when it is mentioned that when I, without a hair on my face, fell in, it was with a company, every man of which had a fighting beard, and strong and thick at that. Beards were a legacy from the Crimea, and Indian Mutiny, where all warriors wore them, and many in the ranks and amongst the officers had been in these wars of twenty-five years before.

They had not however worn beards all those years ; they came by them more recently, in this way. The Pioneers of the regiment, about six men and a sergeant, who were supposed to hack a way through all obstacles which might impede the advance of the battalion, always, even in peace-time, wore beards, and also instead of a rifle carried an axe on their shoulders. When a regiment was employed on road-making, as had been the 17th Foot just previously, in the Murree Hills, all the men of the battalion were allowed to grow beards. Coming straight from road-making to the war, they brought their beards with them.

To give another instance of the veteran composition of the regiment, it may be mentioned that the senior Captain, Cecil McPherson, had twenty-seven years' service, and had joined three years before the Crimean War ; whilst the senior Subaltern, C. W. Vulliamy, had seventeen years' service, and the Adjutant, J. G. Anderson, fourteen years. No one really troubled much about promotion in those days, the mess was a happy band of comrades, mostly with good private means, who travelled about the world in company, and fought the Queen's battles, where, and when, required. Between battles they had a pleasant life, were hospitably received, and themselves hospitably entertaining, wherever they went ; played cricket, shot, danced, dined, and drilled. No beastly examinations in those days !

The plan of campaign was for one division, under Sir Sam

Browne, to force its way up the Khyber Pass ; a second under Sir Frederick Roberts to move up the Kurrum Valley ; whilst a third under Sir Donald Stewart was to make ugly faces at the Afghans down Quetta way, "demonstrate" I think it is called. The 17th Foot was in General Tytler's brigade, part of Sir Sam Browne's division, the other two regiments of the brigade being the Guides Infantry, and the 3rd Sikhs.

Sir Sam Browne's first objective was the fort of Ali Musjid, a very strong position for those days. That is to say, it was a walled fort, standing on top of a practically unscalable rock, in the middle of the Khyber Pass ; which pass, at that point, was only a few hundred yards wide. True, on each side of the pass were heights which considerably overlooked Ali Musjid Fort, but the nearest, Rhotas, was 600 yards away as the bullet flies. The Vauban, who fortified Ali Musjid, had calculated the range of a firearm at about 150 yards, and had never heard of artillery that could climb mountains 6,000 feet high. So Ali Musjid was considered impregnable, and behind it the Amir talked scornfully to the British.

Sir Sam Browne had a division of three brigades at his disposal—with not a man, or boy, in reserve, it may be observed. His plan was to send the first brigade, under General Macpherson, by a circuitous route, through the mountains, to take the Rhotas heights, whence mountain guns, and the Martini-Henry rifles of the Rifle Brigade, would pour a devastating fire on to the top of the heads of the devoted garrison of Ali Musjid. The third brigade, under General Appleton ("Apple-tart" the soldiers affectionately called him), was in due course to make a frontal attack.

As demonstrating the scepticism of the Afghans regarding the range of British rifles, an interesting story came to our ears—amusing to all but one.

Apparently one of our Martini-Henry rifles, lost or stolen, had got into the hands of the Afridis, a tribe bordering the Khyber Pass. The warrior, who was the proud possessor thereof, was bragging to the Afghans regarding its far-ranging powers. He even averred, that if he sat on the Rhotas heights, at least 600 yards distant, he could hit a man inside Ali Musjid Fort. All laughed this braggart story to scorn, and one of the garrison, with sporting instincts, said that he would sit out in the middle of the Fort, and the Afghans might

have as many shots at him, at a rupee a shot, as he pleased.

The Afridi at once closed with the offer, and forthwith proceeded to climb to the top of Rhotas. The Afridis are marksmen born, and at the second shot he killed the Afghan stone dead. Whether he paid two rupees to the executors of the deceased warrior is not related. More probably they emptied their rifles into this too enterprising marksman, on the earliest occasion.

We of General Tytler's brigade were sent a still further tour through the mountains, so as to drop into the Khyber Pass, well behind Ali Musjid, and thus mop up the fugitives. It may at once be confessed, and thus save further anxiety, that nothing came off according to plan. General Macpherson's brigade, owing to the difficulties of the mountain paths, never reached the Rhotas heights till long after all was over. The third brigade, hoping that at the last moment a blast of fire from Rhotas would pave the way, most gallantly made its frontal assault, and was bloodily repulsed. It remained for the poor old second brigade under General Tytler to retrieve the day, or rather series of days. And so we come to our story again.

At 4 p.m. on November 20, 1878, the second brigade pushed off on their long detour. Leading went the Guides, a picked corps and skilled in mountain warfare; next came the 3rd Sikhs, equally good, and inured through long years to frontier warfare. In reserve came the 17th Foot, for always in those days the British soldier stood as a rock and sure support, should anything go wrong with his Indian comrades, or should the nut be too hard for them to crack.

At first we marched in fours, over a stony plain, each stone being in size anything between a football and a hen's egg; but the going was not too bad, for we were all fresh, and thirsting for battle. About dusk, however, we entered the mountains, and had to string out into single file, and then the trouble began, for 3,000 men in single file take up 3,000 yards or more. It is not so tiresome for those in front, but the further back you are in such a column the worse your fate; as for the 3000th man his is indeed a poor career. Soon it became quite dark, as along a goat track, strewn with sharp stones and boulders, we staggered at the rate of barely a mile an hour for hour after hour.



GUIDES RECONNOITRING.
Colonel Major Major
F. H. Jenkins. George Stewart. Wigram Battye.

To Ward
Anderson

At the head of the column there were doubtless frequent short halts, but none for us in rear, for by the time we had closed up the column moved on again. Soon after midnight, to our immense relief, we reached a small basin in the mountains, and here the brigade bivouacked for a few hours. We were now about 5,000 feet up, and it was freezing hard. Our khaki drill uniforms were wet through with perspiration, and I, for one, had no great-coat. I tried at first to keep warm by walking up and down, for no fires were allowed; but was rather tired and deadly sleepy, and another long march lay in front of us.

In my midnight wanderings I chanced across a funny little affair. It looked like a little bed on short legs, with a canopy over it, and curtains all round. Feeling cautiously inside I found some blankets, and a hard thing which proved to be a bag of brown sugar, in place of a pillow. Assuredly this was no chance to miss, so I nipped in, cuddled the blankets warmly round me, and in two seconds was fast asleep. It was not for long I rather suspect, for a rich brogue broke in—

“ And what the devil may ye be doing in my bed, ye young sphalpeen ? ”

The voice, which was apparently Irish, was the voice of Gallwey, our doctor, and apparently he had reserved this unused hospital dhooly, or litter, for his own use. However he was very kind to me, gave me one of the blankets, and let me sleep under the lee of the dhooly, sheltered from the biting blast—or “ out of the blasted blizzard,” as he put it.

About an hour before dawn, by using various devices to screen them from the enemy, fires were lit in corners and crevices, and a pannikin of tea was served out all round. There was no milk naturally, so we made the remarkable discovery, that in the dark, you cannot tell whether there is milk in your tea, or not. Having had nothing but a biscuit since lunch the day before, the tin mug of tea was very grateful and comforting. Even that I should have missed, had not the kindly Colour-Sergeant searched me out, to give me my share. Then on we went in the dark, in the same old single file.

As daylight strengthened, it became apparent that we were still far from our objective, which, as aforesaid, was the enemy's rear, and that the frontal attack must now be taking place. General Tytler therefore decided to hurry on the leading

regiment, which was the Guides, whilst the rest of us plodded on as fast as we could.

The Guides eventually, towards evening, climbed down into the Khyber Pass, at the appointed spot, followed shortly by the 3rd Sikhs, whilst the 17th Foot bivouacked on the heights above. The arrival of Tytler's brigade, though late, was decisive, and saved Sir Sam Browne from having to make a second bloody assault, which he had planned for the next day. An Oriental, and even a Turk, is extraordinarily delicate about his rear ; so no sooner did the Afghans become aware of Tytler's position, astride their line of retreat, than they hastily abandoned Ali Musjid, and fled. The Guides, and 3rd Sikhs, mopped up a good few, and the battle was won.

Here occurred a very curious affair which much impressed us at the time. As the Guides were barring the retreat of the Afghans, a squadron of Afghan cavalry made a bid to charge through. Some succeeded, many were shot down, but alone in rear appeared a solitary cavalier, calmly walking his horse into the concentrated fire of two infantry regiments. By some miracle he was not hit, and he just waved his sword in cool defiance. Colonel Jenkins, who commanded the Guides, was so struck with the man's bravery, that he ordered the "cease fire," and sent down one of the Guides to parley with the warrior. After a few words the warrior was seen to dismount, tie his horse to a bush, and with his drawn sword still in his hand, accompany the messenger up the hill. To him the Colonel said—

" What foolhardiness is this ? Who art thou ? And whence comest thou ? "

" I am Such-a-one, a warrior of the sword, and fear no man. What does your Honour wish to say ? "

" By Jove ! He is a brave fellow," thought the Colonel, " just my sort." Then turning to the man he said, " I like you, you are a brave man. Will you enlist in my regiment ? "

" Without doubt," replied the warrior, without waste of words.

So Such-a-one, late of the Kazilbash Horse, became one of the Guides, and was given the rank of lance-duffadar¹ for his bravery !

We were all extraordinarily hungry by this time, having

¹ Lance-Sergeant.

had nothing much to eat for two days, when a very welcome present, in the shape of seventeen live sheep, came from Colonel Jenkins, these being part of his captures. In a miraculously short space of time those seventeen sheep were killed, skinned, and were appearing on ramrods and skewers over wood fires. Freshly killed, and half-raw mutton, is not very nice, but it is better than nothing, and takes quite a long time to chew.

Next morning I did a fairly good deal in the provender line. In my pocket was a very small flask of brandy ; somehow this important information got abroad in the regiment, and at once I became a great favourite. One grizzly warrior pressed two hard-boiled eggs into my hand, another a chunk of bully beef, and a third a bit of biscuit, each receiving in return a thimbleful of brandy. With a bottle of that elixir I could have lived like a lord for a week.

My luck was evidently well in ; for by chance I came across five broken cigars lying in the Pass, which were hastily annexed. Hardly had this harvest been reaped when Buller, one of our subalterns, who wore a massive beard, might be seen peering and searching along as if for lost treasure. When he came to me he said—

“ You haven’t seen some broken cigars lying about, have you ? Like an ass I threw them away.”

“ Yes, I have, here they are.”

“ By Jove, you are a brick, give them back to me, and I’ll let you have two.”

“ Done with you. Thanks awfully.”

Broken up and stuffed into a pipe they lasted me for a day or two. Such is life.

CHAPTER II

IN THE AFGHAN WILDS

WE still had no baggage or rations, but as the enemy was running away with great rapidity, it behoved us to run after him. This we did down to Dakka, which is on the Kabul River, out and beyond the Khyber Pass. Here however we had to stop, because however willing the legs may be, one must have bully beef, or biscuits, or both, to keep them going. So we sat, because we had to sit, whilst the Government hurled fearful words at the Amir, to the tune of " You just see what terrible fellows we are."

All this passed over our heads ; all we thought of was food, and a blanket. At length, five days after we had pushed off, everything arrived in plentitude ; the plentitude going so far as to include my full-dress uniform, and heavy kit. These were packed in a set of those patent chests of drawers, fitting into two opulent iron-bound cases, which were much affected by the subaltern of those days, and weighed about a ton. How all this stuff got up from Lahore to Peshawur, and thence on to Dakka, reflects enormous credit on my servant, yclept Kadir Baksh, and our Quartermaster, the excellent Fallon. As my true allowance of baggage was 80 lb. for tentage, and 80 lb. for kit, the future of this colossal delivery seemed problematical, but, Lord bless us, we may all be killed next day, and anyway the old Dad had paid for it all.

Christmas Day found us still at Dakka, and the kindly forethought of our Mess President, the same excellent Captain Gamble, had insured that, somehow or other, one quart bottle of champagne, per officer, should be at Dakka, on that date. Whether it was disguised as live shell, or only comforts for the comfortless, assuredly it was there. A good dinner we had too, but most of us had never discovered before that certain drinks must, to have full value, be drunk out of certain vessels. Champagne out of a tin mug, is just fizzy stuff tasting of tin,

with an *arrière pensée* of tea, or tooth powder. Nevertheless the effort was splendid on Gamble's part, and so was the further endeavour which secured for each of us an Havana cigar.

In one minor matter I was in a very superior position. An old brother officer of my father, Colonel Miller, had, as I passed through Lahore, bestowed on me a little double fly-tent, made in the local jail. This pattern of tent was later known to fame as a Kabul tent. It weighed only 80 lb., so was within the tentage allowance, whilst all the other officers in the regiment, from the Colonel downwards, had to share a bell-tent, weighing 160 lb., between two. For the last joined subaltern to be better housed than anybody else, was clearly indecent, if not actually insubordinate. So I first offered my tent to the Colonel, then to the senior Major, and then to my Captain ; but they were all kind good fellows, and said—

" Yours is the luck, young fellow, stick to your tent, we are ordering up others like it."

In a few months there were hundreds of Kabul tents in the force ; and to this day, though somewhat reduced in size, it is the standard tent for officers on service in India.

Two expeditions were made into the Bazaar Valley to punish the Afridis, a truculent tribe of warriors, who had been attacking our convoys, and making themselves generally a horrible nuisance. Neither of these expeditions was very interesting. We saw not a soul, as we went in ; blew up some forts when we got there, and then retired very uncomfortably sniped from flanks and rear the whole way out. However, we got a little back on them by laying a booby trap for one hardy lot of followers up. We got them nicely, at about 10 yards range, in this wise. In retiring through mountain defiles, the art of war is to hold the heights on each side, whilst the main body of the rear guard in the centre slips away. The two flank parties then disappear, as inconspicuously as they can, to another position in rear. On this occasion the two flank parties disappeared as usual, and our old friend the Afghani came briskly along the bottom of the Pass, counting on the central party having gone too. But it had not, and thus managed to bowl out these thrusters at 10 yards range. After that not a soul came near us, nor was a shot fired, during the rest of the retirement.

After the main Afghan army had run away past Jellalabad, indissolubly connected with its memorable defence in 1840 by the 13th Somersetshire Light Infantry, and after we had got up supplies and transport, Sir Sam Browne moved on to Jellalabad. There we stopped till the early spring, whilst the Government continued sending fierce words to the Amir. But on April 1 a new complication arose. The warlike tribes on our southern flank thought they would have a dash on their own at us; whilst an equally truculent demonstration appeared from the north. To meet, and defeat these, Sir Sam Browne decided to send a small force of infantry, with some squadrons of cavalry, to meet the Southerners, whilst a small cavalry force would cross the Kabul River, and deal with the Northerners.

It was whilst this latter force was crossing the Kabul River by a ford at night, that a whole troop of the 10th Hussars was drowned. The current, though strong, was only belly deep on the ford. Owing however to the darkness, and the tendency for both men and horses, unless kept on an upward bearing, to deviate insensibly downwards, the troop got into deep water. It seemed that the leaders had without knowing it turned slightly down-stream, and were swept off the ford into deep water; and that those following, not knowing what had happened, nor hearing anything in the roar of waters, followed on, so that one after the other, trooper after trooper, was swept off, and drowned.

Long years after, during the Relief of Chitral, the sword of young Harford, who was with the troop, was recovered, as will in due course be related.¹

The small force sent to deal with the Kughiani tribesmen, who were threatening from the south, was commanded by Sir Charles Gough, V.C., and consisted of a squadron each from the 10th Hussars, and the Guides Cavalry, together with a Horse Artillery battery; as well as a wing each from the 17th Foot, 27th Punjab Infantry, and 45th Sikhs. The infantry was placed under Captain (local Lieut.-Colonel) C. McPherson of the 17th, and as I happened to be his subaltern, and also had a quite unauthorised pony, he made me his galloper.

When we reached Futtahabad, about 10 miles from Jellalabad,

¹ See p. 138.

a very large body of tribesmen was to be seen, holding a long ridge, which rose gently from the stony plain. Banners were displayed all along the line, a good deal of fierce tom-tomming was going on, and wild shouts could be heard. Sir Charles Gough moved off to the attack, with the cavalry and Horse Artillery, bidding the infantry follow at their best pace. Colonel McPherson took up his position on a forward mound, and from this we had an admirable view of the little battle.

First the Horse Artillery galloped up, unlimbered, and began to shell the enemy at close range ; but either the fire was ineffective, or else the enemy thought the guns were without support, for without further to do, they started at a run, in great masses, to capture them. Seeing this, Sir Charles Gough ordered the 10th Hussars and Guides Cavalry to charge. We from our little mound saw them start, and then, just before they reached the enemy, it was evident that they must have come on to some seemingly impassable obstacle. The 10th Hussars wheeled by troops to find a better place ; but the Guides Cavalry disappeared into the abyss.

This proved to be a 9-foot drop into a nullah, or dry water-course, with an equally unpleasant cliff to climb on the far side, the crest of which was lined with ferocious warriors, firing for all they were worth. The Guides arrived in the abyss, immediately scattered, thrusting up and down the nullah to find a way out of this horrible predicament. By twos and threes they found means, here and there, to scramble up the opposite bank, and with a wild cheer fell on the astonished tribesmen.

Major Wigram Battye was in command of this squadron of the Guides, but had been mortally wounded a few minutes before, so that the command had devolved on a young subaltern, recently joined, named Walter Hamilton. His great dash and gallantry that day won him the Victoria Cross, though he never lived to wear it.

Almost simultaneously the infantry came into action a little further to the left, and we saw another heroic little drama. The 17th Foot were advancing, by short alternate rushes, but the enemy stood firm, especially round a big man, with a big standard. The opposing lines were getting very close to each other, when a little figure in khaki was seen to dash

out from the 17th line, straight at the big man with the standard. The standard went down, and the enemy fled ; but the brave little figure had gone down too. It was Wiseman, a subaltern of the 17th, and one of the smallest officers in the army. He had no weapon but a light blunt tailor's sword. With this he ran the big man through the stomach, and snatched the flag from him. But he could not withdraw his sword, and in a second was cut down by those escorting the flag.

The whole line of the tribesmen, probably 5,000 in number, might now be seen in full flight, with the Guides and 10th Hussars in hot pursuit. We could see distinctly the flash of swords, and the glitter on the silver cross-belts. Following on in support the infantry found the plain strewn with dead, indeed the Guides claimed to have killed 400 as their share. The bubble was at any rate safely pricked ; for next morning not an armed enemy could be seen within 20 miles of the battlefield.

The men of the Guides were devoted to Wigram Battye, so much so that they would not allow any but themselves to carry his body the 10 long miles into Jellalabad. There it was hastily embalmed, taken by the men of the regiment by river and road, another 80 miles, down to Mardan, the headquarters of the corps in India, and there buried.

The pony which secured me a staff appointment on this occasion, came to me in rather a nice way. There was an old Indian officer, named Ibrahim Khan, who had served under my father in many a fight, even before the Mutiny of 1857. He was a man of good family, chieftain of his village, and a large landowner. Hearing that the son of his old Sahib was slogging along on foot in Afghanistan, he thought this a most deleterious business, which required immediate alleviation. So he started forth a cavalcade, consisting of one horse and one pony, guarded by three of his mounted retainers, all under command of his head retainer. His orders were to march up the line towards Kabul, till they found the footsore son of his Sahib, and having found him to hand over the animals for his use and pleasure.

In due course the faithful retainer, with his cavalcade, found us at Jellalabad, though how on earth he got there is still a deep unfathomed mystery. Anyhow, one day the cavalcade marched into the camp of the 17th Foot, and

demanded to see Younghusband Sahib. I did not know one word of any Eastern tongue, and the delegates knew none other, but happily they brought a letter written in English which read : " It having been brought to my notice that George Sahib, son of my old General Sahib Bahadur, who may God preserve, is now engaged in battles without the help of a horse, this his servant sends him two poor beasts, that he may have more comfort in the battle. Salaams from Ibrahim Khan."

I took the letter to the Colonel, and he, knowing somewhat of the East, advised me to accept the pony, but to return the horse, explaining in a very polite and cordial letter of thanks, that there were no rations for any but authorised chargers in the war, but the pony I could manage to feed. The Khan's retainer was deeply distressed, and said he could never show his face again to his master if the horse was returned. But Moir, who knew a bit of the language, explained to him the whole situation, and told him what was in the letter, so eventually he departed, looking however as if he was going to his own funeral.

It was really only due to the kindness of the invaluable Fallon, our Quartermaster, that the pony ever got any rations at all, but Fallon being an old soldier, not only managed it, but kept the pony on the plump side. It may be added that Ibrahim Khan not only sent the pony, but also a syce to look after him. This syce also the invaluable Fallon managed to feed.

Just about this time the Amir of Kabul died, or ran away, or was murdered, I really forget which, Amirs do such strange things. So we British produced, or someone else produced, a successor. This was Yakub Khan, who now became the new Amir. As Yakub Khan was for peace, we could now get on with the business, and our army moved up to Gundamuk, at the mouth of the Jugdulluk Pass, there to await the new Amir, who had been summoned to negotiate a treaty of perpetual peace and friendship.

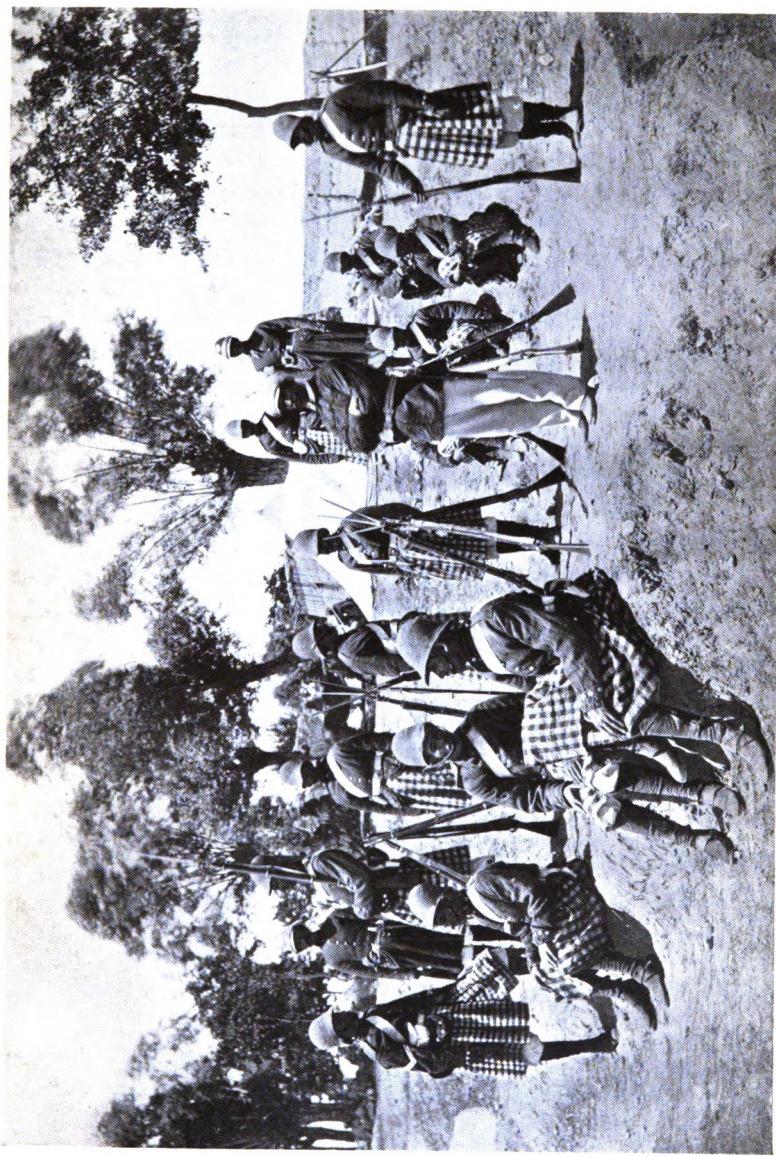
Sir Louis Cavagnari was the British plenipotentiary, a man of great courage, intimate knowledge of the local problems, and inured to Oriental diplomacy. What went on inside the big tent naturally none of us subalterns knew, but I had a curious experience outside.

The Amir expressed a desire to hear the massed bands of the British regiments play a few choice airs. An officer was told off to conduct the procession there, and it being my turn for brigade duty, this fell to me. Just before we marched off, a message arrived from Sir Louis Cavagnari to the effect, that if the Amir offered me a present, I was to accept it. This absolution came because it is a standing order, in India, that no officer shall on any account accept a present from an Oriental. Experience having shown that such presents are merely bribes, often very subtly, and even courteously, disguised. My brother subs. were rather envious about this, and cursed their luck that it had not been their turn for brigade duty.

Some thought that I should return mounted on a priceless grey Arab stallion ; others considered that a precious ruby of the largest size set in a massive gold ring would be my guerdon ; whilst a ribald minority were of opinion that I should return a married man, towing along one of the Amir's superfluous queens, the said queen being adorned with black eyes, and rejoicing in a generous physique. Well, we played our tunes, or rather the massed bands played them, whilst I sat with a proud, yet humble air, as the great master musician. In due course the programme finished up with "God save the Queen," and another, a fearsome melody, assuredly invented by our bandmaster, which was supposed to represent "Allah preserve the Amir," or sentiments to that effect.

I had been sitting silently by the Amir all the time, neither of us knowing one single word of each other's language, but hearing "God save the Queen," and the other tune, I rose, and making my smartest salute asked leave to depart. Outside I had just "Hup't ! Hah'd !" and the bands were already marching off, when a very stout individual, bearing a very heavy bag, came panting after us. He tried to thrust the heavy bag into my hands, and gasped the word, so well-known in the East, "Bakshish." I was struck of a heap, as they say in Billingsgate, or somewhere of that sort. An Arab horse, or a ruby ring by all means, but not a large tip in silver. So I politely thanked the stout gentleman, remarked what a pleasure it had been to play before the Amir, and shaking him warmly by the hand marched back to camp.

That night when I was in bed, my native servant entered



THE AMIR YAKOOB KHAN'S " HIGHLANDERS."

stealthily, with the self-same bag, and placed it on the ground by my bed. "The Wazir Sahib of the Amir, sends this poor present to your Honour, that it may be given to the musicians." The musicians received it all right, each according to his rank, and prowess with wind instruments. In the bag were Rs. 500 of the best, and shiniest, which made a nice little present for each. The mode of its arrival was thoroughly Oriental. In broad daylight evidently the Sahib was shy, but at night perhaps! No one would know he had received it, and he might take a portion, or half, or all of it. Probably the Wazir to this day imagines that I annexed the loot!

The negotiations in the big tent resulted in a treaty which was to be one of eternal friendship between the British and the Afghans, and was named the Treaty of Gundamuk, and which as a matter of fact lasted just three months. Two of the conditions of this treaty were that a British Embassy should be established at Kabul, and that the Amir should have no dealings with the Russians without our consent. In return the British Government would give the Amir liberal pocket money, £200,000 a year or so, just to keep his heart warm.

It was now June, and perfectly poisonously hot in tents, on top of which cholera in a virulent form broke out amongst the troops. Under these untoward conditions, the army had to march back to India. It was a terrible march. We, in the 17th, buried Allfrey, the cheeriest of our subalterns, at Gundamuk; and all the way down little mounds, and groups of mounds, marked our way. At Allfrey's sale (for on service in the East everything belonging to a deceased officer, except such few things as may be of value to his relatives, are sold by auction), I bought a very fine greyhound, named Baz, for ten rupees (= £1 in those days).

Allfrey, who was a good judge of a horse or a dog, had seen this dog in possession of an Indian officer of the 11th Bengal Lancers, and had given a handsome price for him. He had been named Baz, by his former owner, because he had eyes of the same yellowish brown colour as has a hawk, known in the East as a *baz*.

A big powerful dog, and as fast as most English greyhounds; indeed, he owed his speed to a strain from some greyhounds which Colonel Lumsden of the Guides had, some twenty years before, imported from England. Greyhounds are, as a rule,

not very domesticated or affectionate ; not typical subalterns' dogs like terriers, but Baz was an exception.

I never really took much notice of him, but he was always with me, and if he felt cold, slept on the foot of my bed. For the life of me, I cannot now remember how he got about ; but wherever I was, whether in a *dâk gharri*, or in a train, or at an hotel, or marching to Kabul, or down at Calcutta on language leave, or wherever it was for years, there assuredly I remember Baz. He was a big dog too, not easily to be concealed. His end was as faithful as his days on earth—but of that later.

On our march down from Gundamuk we did not suffer so much as some other regiments ; the Rifle Brigade, for instance, arrived at Peshawur a mere skeleton of a regiment. I had one or two mild attacks of cholera myself, but our doctor, McWaters, saved me each time. He said : " If you feel the least bit upset inside, just get a wine-glass of brandy, put into it from fifteen to thirty drops of chlorodyne, drink it off, and lie down for a couple of hours. If you can't get brandy, get whisky."

That saved me three times during that period, and has several times since, the latest being during the Mohmand Expedition of 1908. It is a thing to be remembered by those who are up against cholera.

If Gamble, or Alfrey, or Watson who was my Sandhurst friend, and joined with me, could have taken these simple remedies earlier, they might perchance still be alive. But unfortunately one cannot always, especially on service, follow this saving advice, for one may be next for duty, or on picket, or on the march. Watson, a dear cheery fellow, got a touch of cholera, but seemed to have fought it off, enough anyway to be carried down to Peshawur. Thence he was shipped off to Murree, a hill station ; but the strain had been too great ; so with little more than one year's service, he joined the gallant band, who are England's greatest glory.

Just before it reached India, the 17th Foot were stopped at Lundi Kotal, in the Khyber Pass, and there ordered to remain in garrison. Lundi Kotal is not as hot as Peshawur, but it is a fairly insalubrious spot, especially when living in tents, and cholera was still with us. On five nights running we buried five British officers and forty men. Amongst the officers was one we could ill spare, that excellent fellow Gamble of ours.

Anyway it was a nightmare of a time, and no need to dwell upon it.

Then came a thunderclap. The war was over, we thought, a treaty had been signed with the Afghans, and Sir Louis Cavagnari, with an escort of the Guides, was installed as British Ambassador at Kabul. In that wondrous manner in which news travels in the East, there was in Peshawur City, on September 3, 1879, a rumour that the British Ambassador, and his escort, had been massacred in Kabul. No one paid very much attention to this rumour, for rumours are always rife in Peshawur, but three days later a trooper of the Guides, by name Shahzāda (Prince) Taimus, arrived at the British outposts, and confirmed the news, adding, he thought, that he was the only survivor.

Shahzāda Taimus, though only a trooper in the Guides Cavalry, was a prince of the blood royal, being a scion of the royal house, known as the Durāni dynasty of Afghanistan. This was one of the unique features of the Guides : they enlisted brave men only, whether princes, peasants, or free-lances ; whether they were Indians, Afghans, Turcomans, Persians, or Central Asians ; and promotion only went to the bravest of the brave.

The story told by Shahzāda Taimus was briefly this. There was a certain amount of insubordination in an Herati regiment, recently arrived at Kabul, regarding arrears of pay. Some heedless, or mischievous, person announced that there was plenty of money in the British Residency. Why not demand it ? The affair commenced with a hooligan brawl, and ended with a day-long fight to the death, between countless thousands of Afghans, and the seventy-five men of the Guides, who were Sir Louis Cavagnari's escort.

The story of the fight¹ is one of the most heroic ever recorded, for after twelve hours' Homeric struggle, Shahzāda Taimus remained the only survivor of the British Embassy.

His escape was marvellous. Hamilton, the same Hamilton who had won the Victoria Cross at Futtehabad a few months before, ordered Taimus to take a letter to the Amir, claiming his protection. Shahzāda Taimus unarmed, and holding up his hands, shouted : "I am a Mahomedan amongst Mahomedans and take a letter to the Amir." By some

¹ See *The Story of the Guides*. Published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

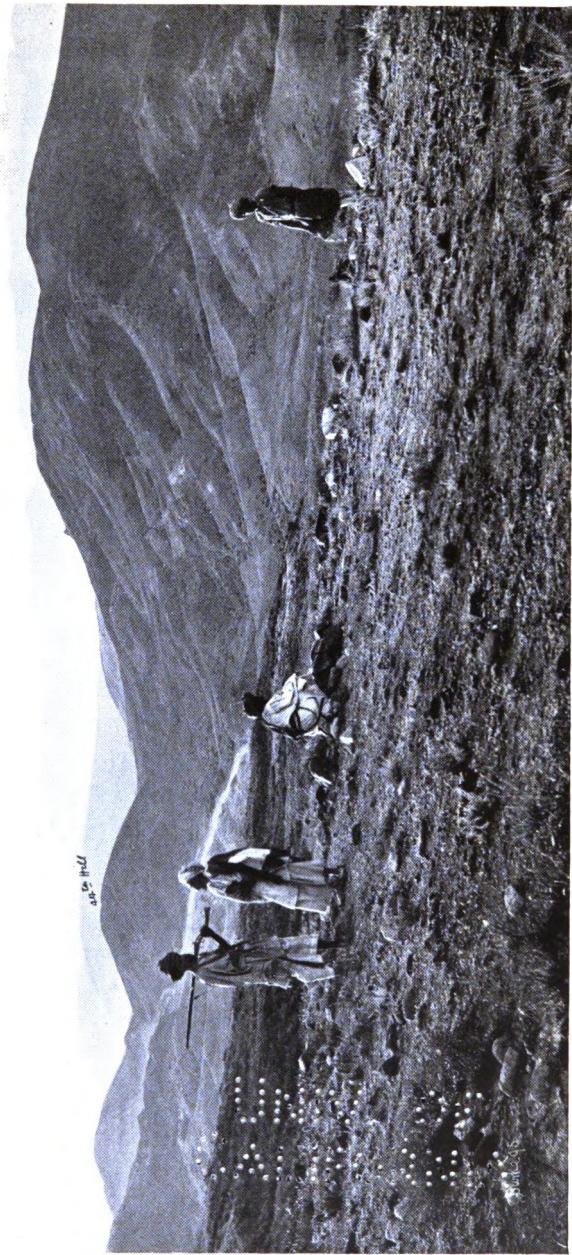
miracle he passed unscathed through the fierce besiegers, and delivered his message. The Amir was impotent, but caused Shahzāda Taimus to be concealed, and after all the British officers, and their escort, had been killed, connived at his escape in disguise to India.

Apart from the tragedy, what affected us soldiers was that this meant a new war with Afghanistan in order to exact retribution for a cowardly and unprovoked attack on a peaceful mission. The force nearest Kabul was the Division of Sir Frederick (afterwards Earl) Roberts, which was at or near the Peiwar Kotal. Lord Roberts' passage of the Shuturgurdan Pass, 12,000 feet high, his victory against great odds at Charasiah, and his capture of Kabul, was one of the finest feats in that great soldier's career.

My own regiment, the 17th Foot, was too depleted, by the hardships and casualties of the late campaign, to take the field again, and was sent back to be in reserve at Nowshera. This did not suit me very well, and as my father had many kind friends in India, including Colonel Sam Black, the Military Secretary, these very kindly arranged for my temporary transfer to the Guides, for the duration of the war. But apparently it took a good deal of correspondence, backwards and forwards, before this small matter could be settled, so I missed the fighting, and only joined at Kabul after it was over.

On the way up, the convoy I was marching with was twice attacked, in the Jugdulluk Pass. A convoy of mules and camels strung out in single file is often several miles in length, and is naturally very vulnerable, especially when winding through defiles in the mountains. There are two methods of protecting it. One is to send out pickets both ways from the permanent posts, which are generally about 10 miles apart. The other is, for the convoy to take with it a guard strong enough to be able to furnish the pickets, as it goes along. Our convoy was moving under the latter alternative.

On entering the Jugdulluk Pass, we found the heights on the left already held by the enemy too strongly for our picket to force them; so I was sent up with a few more men to assist. It was not a difficult job, for by slipping a few men round to right and left, so as to turn the position, we soon had them out of it. But I had a sad personal loss. I had a fox



ON THIS HILL THE 44TH REGIMENT MADE THEIR LAST STAND IN 1839, AND WERE KILLED TO A MAN.
The hill stands at the southern exit of the Jugdulluk Pass, and was, till they were re-buried, white with human bones.

NO MUNDO
PENSAMENTO

terrier, as had most right-minded subalterns in those days, by name Judy, the very apple of my eye. Well, I had taught this terrier "to go for niggers," in other words, to shoo-away importunate or dishonest coppered-coloured gentry, who might be hanging about my tent, or compound. Judy was with me in this little scrimmage, and as we drove the Afghans at the point of the bayonet out of their sungar, several gentlemen, in voluminous white garments, might be seen fleeing in a very agile manner.

"Hullo ! there goes a nigger," said Judy to herself, and off she went, " Yep, yep, yep."

Just as the last of the fugitives was dropping behind the ridge beyond, Judy caught him up, and flew at his baggy trousers. We saw a big Afghan knife flash in the sun, and then dog and man disappeared. It was not feasible to go chasing off, away from our job, to look for my dog, and so with deep grief we gave her up for lost.

Nearly a month after, a note came from a friend right down the line, to say that one morning he had found a very thin and tired little dog, asleep on the foot of his bed, and on the collar was the name Judy. So Judy was brought up by a kind soldier, and there was great joy and rejoicing, when she met old master again. Unfortunately she could not tell us where she had been all that month, whether chasing relays of Afghans with baggy trousers, or merely searching up and down the line for old master.

I forgot to mention that we had noticed near the mouth of the Jugdulluk Pass, when we first came to Gundamuk, a considerable mound, a small hill in fact, the top of which showed up white in the sun, as if covered with chalk. A cavalry patrol which was working in that direction, was told to find out what the white stuff was. The patrol came back, and reported that the hillock was white with human bones, bleached by the sun.

It proved that these were the bones of the 44th Foot, who had died here to the last man, in the disastrous retreat from Kabul some forty years before. There are indeed few places in the world that the bones of British soldiers do not whiten, and with them has been built the greatest Empire that the world has ever seen. These remains of a noble regiment were re-interred, so that the hillock no longer shows white.

Marching up the Jugdulluk Pass, we had a second little adventure, with our convoy. Thackeray, a Sandhurst friend of mine, and then in the 51st King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was doing flanking duty on our left, when word was brought down to the Pass that he had been badly wounded, and asking for a stretcher to be sent up, and also for a few more men. I was sent up with the stretcher and the reinforcement, and being a lazy young beggar, and averse to walking when I could ride, stuck to my pony—a coal-black fellow, which stood out like a black bullseye on a white target. We found Thackeray lying on the ground, looking pretty bad. Apparently a snider bullet, which weighs an ounce, and has at its base a plug of terracotta, turning it into an expander, had hit him fair in the chest. At the back near his shoulder blade was a huge lacerated hole, nearly as big as my fist, showing where the bullet made its exit.

There was a half-caste apothecary who came up with me, and who gave us to understand that Thackeray would not have to be carried far. I said a cheerful word or two to him, as boys will to one another, and then had to get on with my job, which was to clear away the scallywags in front, and get the convoy on. Still being a lazy ass, and the ridge fairly level on top, I thought I would save a bit more shoe leather and continued riding. Naturally my black pony came in for a considerable amount of attention, and all discreet soldiers kept as far away from me as possible. I don't know how long I should have gone on with this foolishness, when a sportsman, from up above somewhere, missed me so nearly as to put a bullet into my boot, the same just missing my ankle bone, and going out through the sole of my foot. That gave me the broad hint, so I hopped off, sent the pony down the hill, and finished the job on foot. But even thus my idiocy did not cease. Instead of having the wretched scratch looked to, and properly treated, I concealed the fact that it had occurred, being deadly afraid that I might be sent back or into hospital.

Vaseline is not really a very good remedy for a bullet wound, and I had to have a sprained ankle for a bit; but all was well eventually, and I got on to Kabul.

To return to Thackeray. They carried him carefully down the hill, and the doctor who saw him first thought he had not a dog's chance. When however they got him back into a



THE GUIDES CAVALRY MARCHING OUT TO PURSUE THE AFGHANS AFTER THE
SIEGE OF SHERPUR HAD BEEN RAISED.

In the foreground : the Guides Infantry lining their trenches. Beyond : a good view of the Kabul Valley.

EST. 1910
HAROLD LIAO

hospital, and began probing about, in the blunt manner of those days, they could not find a hole that went right through my friend Thackeray. Further examination happily showed that the bullet, probably a spherical one and not a snider, had hit his ribs, and then running round, under the skin, had made a large door for its exit at the back. Thackeray recovered completely, and is alive to this day.

Kabul is a very pleasant spot, very beautifully situated, and after the fighting was over, we had a very pleasant time there. It was at Kabul that I first met Lord Roberts. All the regiments of the force were drawn up, to witness the bestowal of rewards for gallantry, on the men who had specially distinguished themselves. There were a good few of the rewards to be bestowed on the Guides, and these brave fellows were drawn up in line in front of the battalion. Lord Roberts distributed the medals, and then, just as he was moving on, glanced over the battalion, which was drawn up in quarter column. I was right behind eight companies, but Lord Roberts spotted me at once, and asked the Colonel—

“Who is that new officer?” The Colonel told him.

“Send for him, I should like to make his acquaintance.”

So I was hauled forth, and the little great man shook me warmly by the hand, and congratulated me on having joined so fine a corps. From that day forth he never forgot me, though, even after years of interval, we might meet in such unexpected places as Asprey’s shop, or on the Veldt in South Africa, or in a ball-room at Simla. Nor have I a beaky nose, or red hair, or pink eyes, or anything really to catch hold of. Lord Roberts was the same with everyone; he never forgot a face, and what was still more wonderful, a name.

Whilst we were living this peaceful life at Kabul, playing polo, shooting, and enjoying ourselves, another bomb fell, as it often does in those explosive parts. News was flashed through, via India, that General Burrows’ brigade had been defeated, and practically annihilated, at Maiwand, somewhere between Quetta and Herat, in Southern Afghanistan. Orders came that Lord Roberts, with 10,000 picked troops, was to march at once to Kandahar, which was now besieged, and that Kabul and northern Afghanistan were to be evacuated, after placing a new Amir on the throne, in place of the incapable Yakub Khan.

By great good fortune the British Government had just found the right man, Abdurrahman Khan, a Prince of the Blood, who had been a fugitive in Russian territory, and was now on his way to be interviewed at Kabul by Sir Lepel Griffin, the representative of the British Government.

The Guides, horse and foot, had been sent out on the Balkh road to meet and escort in the new Amir. Whilst we were there, one evening Lord Roberts rode out to our camp, and said to the Colonel—

“I have been ordered to take 10,000 picked troops to Kandahar, and should like to take you.”

“We should be only too glad to go,” replied Colonel Jenkins, “but I think it is only fair to tell you that I have only 500 men left in the Guides Infantry, and only 200 horses in the Guides Cavalry. You see we have been two years on end at war, without relief.”

“Well, that is very straight and honest of you,” said Lord Roberts. “I’ll let you know later.”

In the end, Lord Roberts, quite rightly, decided to take two fresh regiments, the Central India Horse and the 15th Sikhs, in place of the Corps of Guides. It was a sad disappointment to us all, especially as we thus missed the historic march from Kabul to Kandahar. But the Colonel consoled us by holding out hopes of desperate fighting on our way down to India. Curiously enough this did not materialise; nothing does happen except the unexpected in Afghanistan. So we marched down 170 miles, through thousands and tens of thousands of truculent tribesmen, and through long and difficult defiles, like the Jugdulluk and Khyber Passes, but not a shot was fired at us.

Meanwhile Lord Roberts had marched from Kabul to Kandahar, and there severely defeated the Afghans, in September, 1880. Thus was concluded a war which had lasted close upon two years with a fine and resounding stroke, which kept the Afghans quiet for forty years.

CHAPTER III

SOME FIGHTING IN EGYPT

THE Afghan War over, it behoved me to return to the 17th Foot, and nothing was nearer my heart. But several things intervened, and the first was the brutal matter of cash. My old father, a soldier himself, was not too well off ; he had put me through a Public School and Sandhurst, given me my outfit, and told me he could afford me £50 a year for two years, and that then I must fend for myself ; for he had my two brothers, Frank and Leslie, coming on.

The 17th Foot was a most charming regiment to serve with, and I loved it ; but one could not live in it on £50 a year, much less on nothing a year. Second reason—I had by good luck got attached to a topping regiment, the *corps d'élite* of the Indian Army, where the pay was a living wage, and where I seemed welcome to stop. At bottom there was a third reason, and I don't mind confessing, rather a potent one. I loathed walking, and was never happy unless astride a horse of sorts.

The Cavalry was in my bones, for my father had been a celebrated rider, and my grandfather, as a gunner, was also a horse-soldier. The Corps of Guides was composed of both cavalry and infantry, and it rested with the Commandant to post a youngster to either one or the other. I rather hoped, therefore, that I might catch the Cavalry side of his eye, which as a matter of fact eventually occurred. So, with enormous regret, I parted with the good old Leicesters, and threw in my lot with the Guides Cavalry.

It is rather a quaint thing, as between cavalry and infantry, each are tremendously proud of their own branch, and rather snort at the other ; whilst both snort, quite politely, at gunners and sappers and such-like. The gunners and sappers, equally politely, snort back at horse and foot.

When I was in the 17th Foot, I might be asked by a

female friend, or dance partner, what my regiment was, and would reply—

“The 17th.”

“Oh yes, the 17th Lancers !”

“Good God, no!—17th Foot.”

In the same way a subaltern of the 17th Lancers, if it had been suggested that he was in the 17th Foot, would undoubtedly have withered that damsel to scorn with—

“Good God, no!—17th Lancers.”

In the Guides, where we were all in the same Corps, one might have imagined that the Guides Cavalry would have given themselves airs over the Guides Infantry. Not at all. We were all one Corps, wore the same uniform, drew the same pay, and were in those days interchangeable. Apart entirely from wealth, some are by nature and inclination horse-soldiers, and some foot-soldiers. In the Guides, where the wealth, or rather poverty, of all was about equal, I found later, when I in my turn was Commandant of the Corps, that there were two applicants for the Guides Infantry for every applicant for the Guides Cavalry. To be precise: out of the sixty-four names of young British officers down on the list, who then wanted to join the Guides, forty-two were applicants for Infantry and twenty-two for Cavalry.

The Guides, when I joined, were emerging from the rough-and-ready fighting lot which Lumsden had raised in 1846. There was no spit and polish about them, quite the contrary! Everybody seemed to wear what was pleasing unto him. I remember the Colonel, for instance, turning out on parade in light buff Newmarket boots, and wearing the full-dress sword of an A.D.C. to the Queen (which by the way, he was) stuck into a brown leather frog-belt. Little drill did we know, or practise, or care for; indeed one caustic war correspondent at Kabul, in describing a stately march past of the Army, mentioned that “the Guides now skirmished past.” But, glitter or no glitter, one thing was certain: the Guides were ready at any moment, by night or by day, to take the field; and when there, were desperate fighters. So the epicures forgave them, and indeed when any tight job was on hand, the most fastidious always asked for the Guides.

The Guides since 1846, or thereabouts, have had their permanent headquarters at Mardan, a little fort about 30

miles from Peshawur, and their duty has been, when not called off for larger operations elsewhere, to guard night and day, year in and year out, a turbulent portion of the North-West Frontier of India. This frontier is never really quiet ; there may be no great doings, or even small goings on, for months on end, but then assuredly the young hotheads, or fanatics, across the border, will get tired of this tranquillity, and so raiding, big or small, commences again.

These hardy tribesmen, whose only livelihood is by the sword, exist strenuously in bleak and impoverished mountain fastnesses, whilst below them lie the rich, fat plains of India ; fields of corn, great herds of cattle, stout, opulent and unwarlike bunniahs.¹ What more natural than to raid these plenteous lands, and carry off what booty comes to hand ! But the British Empire cannot allow its citizens to be thus robbed and terrorised, and therefore maintains soldiers and armed police to protect British subjects, as well as to give hard knocks to those who interfere with them. Thus the Guides lay stationed in a central position, and waited and watched over the 60 miles of frontier entrusted to them. There were few telegraph lines, no telephones, and carrier pigeons had proved not very reliable ; so that the difficulties in the way of getting news of impending raids in time to frustrate them, was very great. Therefore instant readiness to march, and really wonderful marching powers were necessary, if success was to be achieved.

It was a fine life, and extraordinarily good for one's earlier military training. Play polo, hunt, shoot, dance, and be merry ; *but you must be ready at any moment, night or day, to march off into the blue.* And not only march off, but be ready to tackle a pretty tough customer, at the end of the march.

Whilst living this very interesting and often exciting life, one day the camp of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Robert Egerton, the father of Raleigh Egerton, one of our subalterns, pitched itself on our parade ground. This was an auspicious occasion on which it behoved the Corps to bestir itself socially, so we asked the Lieutenant-Governor and his Staff to dinner.

¹ Small shopkeepers and dealers in grain, and foodstuff, and cotton goods, who are often very rich.

As a further offering on the altar of hospitality, one gay fellow suggested that we should have a dance afterwards. The desperate nature of this proposal may be fully realised, when it is mentioned that we had only two ladies in the Corps. One of these could undoubtedly dance through a programme of any length, whilst the other only danced "square dances," as they were called in those far-off dark ages. Square dances are those in which you do not dance at all, or not much, and just slide about, squarely (hence the name) glued to the floor, to the strains of various exciting tunes. In the Lieutenant-Governor's camp was only one lady—the heroine of this story—whilst in our little station were two, or maybe three, other English ladies, wives of civilians.

The dinner was a great success, but for one deadly error on my part. I happened to be Mess Secretary *pro tem.*, and considered this an occasion on which to bring forth our best wine. Being a stationary Corps, our forefathers had laid down a cellar of wine, and there was one perfectly priceless bottle of port, the sole survivor of a bin, covered with the dust of ages, which lay on a special shelf all by itself, awaiting a really heroic end. So I asked the Colonel if the day of doom had arrived, and he said "Yes."

Attended by myrmidons, I myself went down into the cellar, a deep pit which went miles down, and had openings at intervals into the well from which the mess water was drawn. This was a contrivance for the better regulation of the temperature in the cellar, against great heat and great cold.

There, by the light of a candle, I, with my own fair hand, drew the cork, without disturbing the bottle, and decanted the priceless port. Round the neck of this decanter was tied a thread of red silk, and all our own officers were carefully instructed to pass this decanter by, leaving it to our distinguished guests.

In due course the wine went round after dinner, and we drank the Queen's health, and that of the Prince of Wales, who was our Colonel. I did not however notice anyone beaming very much over the priceless port. Indeed the Military Secretary, Sir John McQueen, was looking rather perplexedly at his glass, and then at the ceiling, evidently deeply pondering where he had met that wine before. When that red-threaded

decanter went round with its fellows again, it was noticed that no one made a second onslaught on it.

"Good God!" I thought, "it's corked!"

So I tipped a thimbleful into a wineglass, and tasted it. It was Malaga, a well-known sacramental wine!

How it got into our cellar is easily explained. We had no church at Mardan, in those days, so Sunday service was held in the ante-room of the mess, with the Colonel as parson, like the Captain on a man-of-war. When a visiting parson came over, he usually held a communion service, and for this were kept in stock a few bottles of communion wine. Evidently some benighted idiot had, years before, put one of these bottles of Malaga by mistake in the shelf above, where the old port rested, and it so happened that it had outlived the last survivor.

However the dance that followed is really what matters, as far as this story of heroism goes. There were many amongst our officers who danced not at all, and some only a little, and delicately; thus with six, or with luck only five, ladies to trot out, it looked rather as if the trotters would be in the minority. That being so, and this thus, greatly daring, I went up to Lady McQueen, the wife of the Military Secretary, and asked if I might have the honour of treading on her toes, and so forth.

Lady McQueen was a very beautiful lady, and as nice as you make them, so instead of snorting at me, and saying she was tired, or anything of that sort, she answered, "Righto"—or words to that effect. So off we went.

During a temporary cessation of hostilities, this kind lady remarked, "John" (that was her husband) "has just had a telegram asking for two young officers to be sent for service in Egypt." This was at the time of the Gordon relief campaign.

"Then let us at once tackle Sir John," said I. So we marched up to the Military Secretary and made petition. "I hear, sir, you have been asked for two young officers from the Frontier Force for Egypt. Would I do for one?" Sir John beamed down on me (the Malaga perchance!) and said, "Well, I don't see why you should not, my boy."

Later on in the evening, Sir John accosted me.

"Do you know, young fellow, since you spoke to me, I have had no less than thirty-eight applications, by telegram

and otherwise, for those two appointments. But I won't forget you were the first to apply."

Nor did he forget, the kind old fellow ; for two days later, whilst we were out hawking, an orderly was to be seen pricking o'er the plain as if in a hurry. Arrived panting, he handed me a letter, which contained a stern order to proceed at once to Egypt.

The four subalterns, two from Bengal and two from the Punjab Frontier Force, who happened to be sent, in response to this call from Egypt, were Grover, Lugard, Willcocks, and myself. They all survived that war, and many others ; in fact, between them they served in no less than thirty-three wars ! And all are hale and hearty to this day.

Grover was in the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, and a couple of years senior to the rest of us, who had all been at Sandhurst together a few years before. He saw much fighting on the North-West Frontier of India, and also served in the Boer War, and filled many important positions on the Staff, up to the highest. Thus in due course, and after a distinguished career, he rests on his laurels as General Sir Malcolm Grover, K.C.B., K.C.I.E.

Lugard was in the Norfolk Regiment, the 9th we still called it. After serving as a soldier in the Afghan, Soudan and Burmah wars, his military ardour led him off to command an expedition against the slave traders on Lake Nyasa, in East Africa, in 1888. During this venture he was severely wounded, and so caught the fancy of the Colonial Office that they never afterwards relinquished him. His next employment was in command of the Exploration of the Sabakhi, and Administrator of Uganda, 1889-92. Then shifting across Africa we find him lent to the Royal Niger Company, to command the Expedition to Borgu, and to negotiate British treaties, 1894-95. Next he was placed in charge of the Expedition, for the British West Charterland to Lake Ngami, 1896-97.

Lugard then became H.M. Commissioner for the Hinterland of Nigeria and Lagos, and raised and commanded the West African Frontier Force, with the rank of Brigadier-General. From 1900-6 he was High Commissioner, and Commander-in-Chief, of Northern Nigeria. Sir Frederick Lugard, as he now was, then left Africa, for a term of years, to take up the appointment of Governor, and Commander-in-Chief, of Hong-

Kong, which he held for five years till 1912. Finally he returned to Nigeria, first as Governor, and Commander-in-Chief, of both Northern and Southern Nigeria, and then as Governor-General of Nigeria. Needless to say, successive grateful sovereigns did not fail to reward these eminent services. So that the subaltern of Suakin days is now The Right Hon. Sir Frederick Lugard, P.C., G.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

Willcocks, the third member of the little band of subalterns, has had an equally distinguished career. He was then in the Royal Canadians, the old 100th Foot, and had already served in the Afghan War and the Waziri Expedition, before he came to Egypt in 1885. Scarcely was this war ended, than he found himself participating in the conquest and pacification of Burmah, 1886-89. Then he took part in two expeditions on the North-East Frontier of India—Chin Lushai and Munipoor.

As a Major, Jimmie Willcocks was A.A.G., with the Tochi Field Force, in 1897, on the North-West Frontier of India, when a chance fell to him which was the foundation of his further fortunes. One or two officers were required, in far away West Africa, to serve under the self-same Lugard above mentioned, and Willcocks was selected to be one of these. He went there in 1898, and in two years became a full Colonel, and a K.C.M.G., commanding successively the West African Frontier Force, and the Ashanti Field Force, which achieved the Relief of Kumasi in 1900.

Back to India, first in command of a Brigade, then a Division, and then the Northern Army, he commanded in several Frontier expeditions, and gained amongst other things the distinction of a cartoon in *Punch*. This was entitled “Willcocks’ Week-end Wars,” as a compliment to the success and celerity with which he carried out his operations.

During the Great War, Sir James Willcocks commanded the Indian Army Corps in France with great distinction, and when this was broken up, and its units sent to other fronts, he was made Governor of Bermuda. Thus the third Suakin subaltern is now General Sir James Willcocks, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O.

The fourth subaltern may be left to be decently interred by readers of this book.

Before starting, however, my instructions were to buy 500 camels at Jhelum, and to take them with me! Thus it came

about that before many hours had passed, I was again in the verandah of the same old dâk bungalow at Jhelum, from which I had started for the Afghan War, a few years before, but this time for the purpose of buying camels for Egypt.

Happily a Veterinary Officer, and a Transport Officer with subordinates, were there to assist ; whilst the Deputy Commissioner, through his myrmidons, herded all the camels of the district into Jhelum. I really did not know very much about a camel, but in an hour or two had got the hang of it. The camel must not be too old, or too young, about six for choice ; sound, no sores, a plump hump, and a good pad, no split toes, or slit nostrils, eyes undamaged, temper not too bad, good condition, and not verminous.

The first day we found that now and again we had bought the same camel twice over. The wily owner, having sold his camel, it was placed with the mob already purchased ; but it was easy thence to quietly slip the beast away, make a detour, and arrive anew by a country road, a dusty traveller, with a camel for sale. And as one camel, till you get your eye in, is as like another camel as two sparrows are to each other, we were taken in more than once. That night, however, a wily blacksmith forged a large branding iron, forming the letter Y. Henceforth, as each camel was purchased, plump went a red-hot Y on his rump, and thus all chance of buying him twice was removed.

We secured the 500 camels required in a couple of days, enlisted camel drivers, one to every two camels, and prepared to depart on a railway journey of some 800 miles. This contingent of camels took five special trains, each train carrying 100 camels, together with their attendants, saddles and impedimenta ; also grain and fodder and rations for a week. The loading up of the camels was a nightmare. Most of them had never seen a train, and certainly none had ever been in one. The trucks were small open affairs, with only a 2-foot freeboard.

Never should we have got them on board, had it not been for the kindness of the Colonel of a Sikh regiment, stationed at Jhelum, who, seeing our dilemma, sent down strong fatigue parties of hefty Sikhs. These working like Trojans, literally lifted most of the camels into their trucks, and made them fast, in the kneeling position happily natural to the beast. The load was six camels to each truck, placed head to tail alter-

nately, exactly like the top layer of sardines in a tin. So far so good, as the lady said ; but before the train started, an engine puffing by, or a truck shunted with a crash, caused the whole crowd of gaunt animals to stagger to their feet, one leg in a sling, and gaze wildly around. A camel being miles high, and the freeboard only 2 feet, this looked like certain disaster every time. Happily, by the grace of the camel's Creator, only mild accidents occurred.

At length, and at large, off we went, I with one train, whilst some very useful British N.C.O.'s, who had been lent us by cavalry regiments, and the artillery, took charge of the others. Owing to what must have been miraculous intervention, we had no casualties en route, so that 500 camels arrived safe and sound at Karachi. Here we were joined by 500 more camels, from Umballa or thereabouts, and found a British-India Company's steamer lying waiting at the wharf, ready to take our thousand on board. The Port authorities were adepts at handling animals, though I don't suppose they had heretofore ever dealt with camels.

The camels were led up in single file along the wharf till alongside the ship, and might be seen gazing around in patient astonishment. As each arrived opposite the derrick, the sailors quickly slipped a sling under its belly, hitched an iron hook to the loop, and said " 'Eave !'" Up went the camel, spread-eagle with astonishment, looking like a spider in the sky. Round swung the derrick, out ran the chain, and No. 1 disappeared into the bowels of the ship. Before No. 2 had time to wonder what on earth had become of his leader, he too found himself soaring towards the sun, only immediately to descend into uttermost darkness, where however he smelt and found old comrade No. 1. The camel-men, already on board, received each arrival in the hold, settled them down, and gave them a feed.

The sailors put the thousand camels on board in the course of the day ; up went the Blue Peter, and off we steamed. On board was Dyas of the Berkshires, who had come with the other batch of camels, and five fine British N.C.O.'s. Being senior officer, the commanding officer's suite was apportioned to me, and every morning the menu for the day was brought to ascertain whether the commanding officer approved of it ! This greatly tickled me, having quite recently been in the

pandemonium of a troopship, where only the lowliest subalterns are berthed.

Again a kindly Providence watched over us, and our camels, and several times prevented the ship and its freight from being burnt at sea. The rustic of the Punjab is accustomed, in the cold of the morning, to collect handy bits of hay, dung and sticks, and with these to make a little fire to warm himself. If on land, why not do so on board ship? And he did so. It was my custom to prowl round the decks, hourly or so, during the night, to see that all was well, and also to be up at daylight. To my horror one morning I saw a thin streak of grey smoke coming up through a hatchway. Grasping at once what was the cause, armed with a rattan, I simply flew down that hatchway, and there sure enough was one of our Aryan brothers squatting snugly by a nice little fire, whilst another guileless reveller was busy lighting a second, both fires close to large piles of loose hay and bedding. Hastily stamping out the fires, I warmed those two idiots, much more effectively, though possibly not quite so soothingly, as they expected.

On another occasion, whilst going my rounds at night, and passing along the lowest deck of all, I noticed a deep red glow, and got a strong whiff of tobacco. Stumbling through the rows of sleeping camels towards the glow, a figure, which later proved to be the line sentry, got up, and humming a tune, slowly walked away to a corner. There, being a tidy fellow, or more likely afraid of the sergeant, he emptied the glowing bowl of his pipe on to the dry litter heap. There it began to smoulder comfortably, whilst the sentry walked back to his post. The sequel is supplied by the sentry's story as told to his friends next day :

" On my return to my post by evil chance I met a Sahib in anger, who spoke many hard words to me, then, as one mad, rushed past me and, with aid of a blanket, beat out the small fire I had lit. When the Sahib turned to look for me, I, by the Grace of God, had escaped to the upper deck, and was asleep amongst the camels. God is good ; for it is by no means wise to meet a Sahib under these circumstances. Therefore I fled, and no doubt the blame has now fallen on Ram Bux. Thanks be to God."

The third time we nearly went to heaven, in a fiery ship, was when one of my syces set fire to the great awning, which

was spread from end to end of the ship. My chargers were stabled on deck, and being thus in the open, the syce thought he might, without danger, light his little fire at dawn. The draught however, made by the ship's progress, was sufficient to cause this small effort to flare up, and set light to the awning. The same draught fanned the flame, till almost the whole awning, from stem to stern, was in a blaze, whilst flaming portions fell off on deck, and down the hatchways.

One of the pieces of canvas from the fiery furnace, falling on my horses, they broke loose, and galloped in terror up and down the deck. Every moment I thought they would jump overboard, for a horse does the most idiotic things when he is frightened. However none of us, horses, camels or humans, were for a martyr's death that time, and the fire was eventually assuaged. The syce was judicially arraigned before the captain, and a boatswain impressed on the seat of his pyjamas a solemn warning against repeating the joke.

That syce, Khan Mahomed by name, had a very tragic ending, whilst still in my service, as will be related in due course.

The entrance into Suakin harbour, where our army was concentrating, is like the neck of a bottle ; just a deep narrow passage through a coral reef leading into an oblong lake. It took some careful creeping to get in, and as we crept through the dead flat, a graveyard was slowly passed on the right. Now I am not in the least a superstitious person, nor prone to the dumps, but twice, on entering a campaign, I have had a sort of feeling that I should not come out of it. Once was this time, when going into Suakin. I felt that I should never come out, but remain at rest in that graveyard. The other time was many years later, during the Great War. When ordered back to Mesopotamia, and we were steaming up the Tigris, the foreboding came that I never should leave the Tigris. Yet here I am alive and well, and inflicting this story on all and sundry. Nevertheless, in both those campaigns I very nearly passed the portals, as will appear in the course of this narrative.

In Suakin harbour there were no wharfs, or any convenience of that sort vacant for us, so the ship was just laid as close as possible to the coral shore. The camels were then one by one dropped overboard, and invited to swim ashore, which they all did with great alacrity. What wonderful experiences

they were having ! Train journeys, ship journeys, and now a swim ! Up to the moment of this experiment, which was forced on us, it was a generally accepted notion that a camel, when he fell into deep water, turned turtle, and with his large four feet in the air, placidly drowned.

In the same way it used to be a tradition that a pig could not swim across a river ; because, in the violence of his fore feet action, he cut his own throat, and so died. Yet most of us have seen our quarry, when out pig-sticking, much prefer swimming a river, and quite comfortably too, to being pricked with a spear in the hinder parts.

Having collected our flock on shore, and their saddles and stores having been landed with the aid of lighters, we found we had just arrived in time for a nice little battle. It may be explained that the camels brought from India, were partly to mount men of the Camel Corps, and partly for transport work.

This was in February 1885. The general plan of campaign was for a force of all arms under General Graham, based on Suakin, to move across the desert due west to the Nile, whilst the main advance under Lord Wolseley, based on Alexandria and Cairo, operated up the long length of the Nile. Gordon had been killed in January, and this was partly to avenge his death, and partly to re-establish British prestige in those parts by smashing the Mahdi, and reconquering the Soudan.

Why are politicians such appalling cowards ? So much so, that when brave men like the late Lord Salisbury or Joseph Chamberlain arise, they are looked upon as phenomenons. Mr. Gladstone, on this occasion, got cold feet, just as everyone thought he was really feeling rather brave. It will therefore be just as well here to mention that none of these great schemes came off, possibly were never meant to. It was just a flourish of political trumpets, nothing more.

But the soldiers and sailors had nevertheless to fight some tight, though quite useless little battles, and lost a good many in killed and wounded in these. They were then ignominiously scuttled out of the country, but not by the enemy. Mr. Gladstone, and his political friends, then probably went off, and made enormous and portentous speeches, in Midlothian or elsewhere, explaining how magnanimous the great British nation was, and incidentally how fortunately their destinies were guided by



ENTRANCE OF THE JUGDALLUK PASS, "THE DEVIL'S GATE." See page 26.

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quite exceptionally magnificent statesmen. Politicians make us soldiers sick, and soldiers and sailors apparently make politicians sick, being perchance too straight and honest for them.

However let us be calm, and get back to something clean, the soldiers and sailors, and their doings. General Graham, before he could make much progress, or construct the Suakin-Berber railway, which Messrs. Lucas and Aird had contracted to build, had to crack rather a formidable nut, in the shape of a very warlike and brave tribe of Arabs, called the Haden-dowah. This tribe had wiped Baker Pasha and his army off the face of the earth, and the year before had shown their mettle against us at El-Teb and Tamai.

The desert, from Suakin inland, is not the soft sandy surface usually associated with eastern deserts, but hard firm going, and good to march on, for all arms. But it is thickly, yet sparsely, studded with high thorny mimosa bushes. That is to say, though troops can march in fours through it, by winding in and out of the bushes, yet these are of a height, and are so planted by nature, as to prevent a view of more than 50 yards in any direction, even for mounted men. From our point of view, it was as bad as marching through thick forest, for neither our rifles, nor our guns, were of advantage, as far as range went. Nor could our cavalry charge, in close formation.

This being so, it was decided that the only safe formation in which the force could proceed, was for the infantry to march formed into a huge hollow square, with all the baggage and supplies, massed in the centre; whilst the cavalry hovered a few hundred yards outside on all four faces. Naturally this form of progression was exceedingly slow, and excessively fatiguing.

On the morning of our arrival, this colossal convoy started out towards Tamai, and nobody seeming to want me, I hopped on to one of my horses, and went after it. Coming across Mackenzie of the 9th Bengal Lancers, a friend of mine, I asked the way to the battle. Mackenzie advised me not to go poking about in the bush by myself, and recommended my coming along with him and his squadron. I am glad this advice was taken, for most certainly should I have been speared by Arabs, or shot by our own men, if I had gone on; for almost immediately a fearful row commenced.

At first we thought it was only a stampede amongst the camels and mules ; that a stray lion had strolled in, or something of that sort. But soon came a confused babel of shouts and cries ; then, for one second or two, there seemed a sudden hush ; and then a fierce outburst of rifle fire. From where we were the land sloped gently to the sea, which was only a few miles distant and clearly visible, and between us and the sea, but quite invisible, though only a few hundred yards off, was the great square of British infantry. Happily the fire was not in our direction, or we should have been wiped out, but towards the sea. It lasted quite a short time, only a few minutes perhaps, and then a bugle sounded the "cease fire." After waiting dismounted some little time, and devoutly hoping that some zealous fellow was not going to start shooting in our direction, Mackenzie sent a patrol in to see what it was all about.

This was what had happened. The great square had arrived at a certain point, where it had been decided to form a zareba, and stock it with stores, as a post on the line of communications. The troops were ordered to pile arms, and taking billhooks, directed to cut down mimosa bushes, so as to form the zareba. Whilst the troops were thus engaged, and were mostly unarmed, the Arabs, who had massed quite unobserved on the least suspected side, that is towards the sea, suddenly made a desperate charge, with sword and spear. There must have been 5,000 of them, and they came on with great bravery, quite invisible till within 50 to 100 yards of the square.

The shock fell chiefly on the Royal Berkshire Regiment and the 15th Sikhs ; the latter happily having their rifles with them, slung on their backs. Fire had at once to be opened, though the front could not altogether be clear of our own people, who were being driven in, mixed up with the charging Arabs. The troops, though thus surprised, and greatly handicapped, took up the challenge, and with great staunchness drove off the attack. Had they not done so, the same fate as that of Hicks Pasha and of Baker Pasha would have been theirs—death to a man. Though the burst of fire had been comparatively short, the whole of the bush on that side and round both flanks of the square, was strewn with dead ; the official estimate at the time being 2,000.

The Arabs then sheered off, and the construction of two

zarebas was completed before nightfall. This little battle was known as the battle of McNeill's Zareba, but officially later as Tofrek. Nobody had any time, or energy, to bury these thousands of Arabs, so that the stench round those zarebas, became perfectly awful after a few days, and all one's food, and water, tasted of it.

In this encounter Sir Arthur Wilson, then a lieutenant, known as "Tug" Wilson, afterwards an Admiral of the Fleet, and First Sea Lord during part of the Great War, earned the Victoria Cross. He, and his bluejackets, held a corner of the square, with one or two machine guns, Gatlings or Nordenfeldts, I forget which. Anyway these guns jammed, as was not unusual in the early days of machine guns, and there was great danger of this corner being rushed. But "Tug" Wilson was no man to be rushed, by fuzzy-wuzzies or anyone else, so he sallied forth with his tailor-made sword, to stem the rush. The sword broke, not really being meant for anything more serious than a levée at St. James's Palace, but the hilt remained in his hand. Using this as a most effective knuckle-duster, "Tug" Wilson went in with his fists, followed by his men, and saved the situation at that corner. A very good V.C. everyone thought.

I was lucky enough to buy of a follower, for £5, one of the old Crusaders' swords, which the Arabs carried. Some of these were undoubtedly genuine, and had been handed down from father to son, amongst the Arabs, ever since the days of Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Others undoubtedly were copies, made from the originals. Mine, I think, was genuine, for it has engraved on the blade an old-fashioned English lion, with a Christian cross below; whilst on the other side of the blade is a rough presentment of the Knight's crest, or mark. I gave the sword to the Guides Mess, where it may perchance still be seen.

Riding into Suakin on my camel one day, I came across a curious sight, a regiment of infantry in scarlet tunics, white belts, and white helmets. It was the Australian contingent, which had most sportingly volunteered to come across, and give a helping hand in Egypt. I was rather tickled with the sight of scarlet tunics in the Soudan, but they were still more tickled with the sight of an officer perched up on top of a huge camel, a beast then strange to most of them.

My fox terrier Jock took this campaign with me, and was quite a feature of the force. He thought it was his own sweet self, or his winning ways, that made him so popular ; though indeed he was a nice dog, of quite the best subaltern pattern. But really, between you and me, his chief attraction, or rather what drew attention to him, was a little follower he had.

One day, out in the scrub, my syce came across a tiny gazelle, which could only just have been born. This he brought along in his arms, and fed it from a bottle, lately the property of Messrs. Bass, but now filled with milk, into the mouth of which he had stuffed a not very enticing-looking rag. The rag took the place of Ma's bosom, and the young rascal sucking it vigorously extracted lots of good goat's milk. So much so that in the evening he walked into my tent, and made Jock's acquaintance.

There is a saying amongst the Pathans, that the first day a gazelle is born, a man can catch him ; on the second day, a dog may catch him ; but on the third day, God only. This gazelle never seemed to want to run away, for he and Jock became from the first the warmest friends, and both slept under my camp bed. When I went for a ride on a horse, both Jock and the gazelle came too, but if I went on a camel, both stayed at home ; or walked with the syces if we were on the line of march.

If dogs or other enemies made for the gazelle, Jock went for them, and drove them off ; but friends could be friends with both. These two used to go round together paying visits to their soldier comrades in their tents, and there were made much of. The gazelle never seemed to appreciate his own great speed, which enabled him to outdistance any dog, or enemy. Stocky old English Jock, the terrier, was his friend and protector, and he trotted behind him. It was really rather symbolical.

The pair were with me for nine months, all through the campaign, and then I had to find a nice comfortable home for the gazelle in the Zoo at Lahore.

CHAPTER IV

BY THE WAY IN SUAKIN, 1885

ONE day at Suakin occurred an adventure, which to me personally, was rather more than thrilling. I had been sent back on some job, I forget what, and was standing at mid-day, on the wharf, watching a ship being unloaded. The working party consisted of a gang of convicts, who had been sent down from Alexandria Jail, to make themselves useful.

These convicts were lifers, who had been sentenced for participating too heartily in the Alexandria massacres, of a few years before, and were mostly villains of the most desperate type. A Levantine is a pretty good ruffian at the best, but the criminal Levantine is probably the foremost article in that line which the world can produce.

Guarding this gang of desperadoes, were three negro policemen, who though armed to the teeth, with rifles, bayonets, and what not, found the job rather hot and boring, and so were sleeping peacefully under the shade of a railway truck. I was just noticing this, with some slight amusement, when I felt rather a hard blow on the top of my helmet, and turning round, came face to face with an extremely ugly and powerful-looking convict, who was brandishing a large piece of iron. I am no boxer, but instinct told me to hit the gent hard and true in the face, which I did ; and he fell down in consequence. But behind him were several more villains, all crowding in on me.

Luckily I had my back to a truck (not the one the police were sleeping under), and proceeded to hit out, as hard as I could ; for like an ass I had not even brought a revolver with me, thinking the wharf was as safe as England. As the ruffians had in their hands odds and ends of iron implements, which they had picked up, my career would soon have ended, and I should have taken up my little holding in the graveyard on the spit. But happily at this moment, when I was only badly battered, succour came from two sides.

On the ship, but hidden from view, superintending and checking the unloading of the stores, was a Punjabi clerk. Hearing a slight scuffle, he looked over the bulwarks, and saw a Sahib being attacked. Filled with righteous indignation, he, though quite unarmed, dashed down the gangway, shouting in Hindustani, which language by the way was quite unknown to the Levantine convicts—

“ Oh ! pigs, and sons of pigs, whose mothers were most unchaste, and whose sisters’ morals are of the worst description ! How dare you be disrespectful to the Sahib ? ”

This was a valuable diversion, and caused a welcome pause in the conflict ; but the real decisive factor came from the other end of the wharf. Here a stray sailor of Her Majesty’s Royal Navy, happened to see the little scuffle, and fearing to be out of it, ran like a hare, and charged into the rear of the attacking party. There he dealt such blows, and kicks, and cursed so heartily, that the negro police guard woke up at the familiar sound. Thus between us all the culprits were secured, and handcuffed, without further bloodshed. For his prompt bravery on this occasion, the sailor was given the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and the Punjabi clerk was presented, by the Government of India, with a gold hunter watch, suitably inscribed, and 300 rupees (£25) in cash.

As for the peccant convicts, theirs was a sorry life for many months afterwards. The Egyptian Judge, who tried them, sentenced them to be bastinadoed, I forget how many times a day. To be chained by one ankle to a heavy round shot, and towing this shot, to carry heavy skins of water, and by hand water the streets of the bazaar, throughout the hottest part of the day. I had a chat, in French of sorts, with one of them one day and he told me in quite a friendly manner, that he had meant to commit a murder, so as to get hanged and out of the purgatory he lived in as a life convict. He seemed however to bear me personally no malice whatever for not getting killed, and incidentally for having let him in for further pains and penalties.

A friend of mine, Captain Briggs, who was commanding a company of mounted infantry, had rather a curious escape. We were holding a small zareba at Otao, some miles out from Suakin. One night most of us had gone to bed, including Briggs, when a desultory fire was opened on us, by a few Arabs,

from a neighbouring kopje. Some of us strolled out in our pyjamas to the edge of the zareba, to see what was up, and amongst others Briggs. After our men, on that face, had plastered the kopje with bullets for a bit, the firing ceased, and we all went back to bed again. Next morning Briggs discovered that a bullet had come through the roof of his tent, pierced his bed exactly where he lay, and ricocheted out through the side wall. The only time when this bullet could have travelled through his bed, without killing, or grievously wounding him, was during the few minutes he happened to be out, looking on at the fun at the zareba edge.

Just beyond Otao, was a huge rock, and painted on this, in letters of white, 4 feet high, was the strange device, "JAM 4 to a tin SHAME." This had nothing to do with Pharaoh of the Oppression, nor had the ancient Jews or Egyptians a hand in it. It was quite modern, and this was its origin. Messrs. Lucas and Aird, who as before mentioned were contractors for building the Suakin-Berber railway, had imported a large gang of burly navvies from England, and these they fed sumptuously. Beer galore on tap, heaps of meat, and cheese, bread and butter ; and crowning luxury, jam ! Now the British soldier of those days fed hard on a campaign. His daily ration consisted of bully beef and biscuit, and a little tea ; whilst a tot of rum was issued as a special treat at long intervals, usually on battle-nights. Noticing, as they could hardly fail, these navvies thus luxuriously and plenteously fed, just for laying sleepers, and taking no risks at that, good old Tommy Atkins began to scratch his head, and wonder why he, who did all the fighting, and took all the risks, should live on such comparatively Spartan fare. The medical officers took the matter up, on the excellent ground that to fight well, a man must be fed well, with the result that a ration of jam was sanctioned for the soldiers. But as no one had ever dreamt of such a luxury being required in large quantities by the hardy soldiery, it had to be very economically portioned out. The most the Commissariat could run to, spasmodically, was one small tin of jam, to be divided between four men. The soldiers were happy enough, and took what was given them gladly ; but the navvies, when they heard of this small ration, thought that it was pure pinching, on the part of the Government. So by way of bringing their views

publicly before the authorities, they used Messrs. Lucas and Aird's white paint, in large quantities, to place prominently the aforementioned inscription on the said rock.

Near this rock, possibly gazing at the inscription, one day whilst on trek we saw a lion and a lioness. They moved across our line of march, and several sportsmen braved the Arabs to go after them, but never got a shot. Lions were even then scarce so near to Suakin, and now are not to be found within several hundred miles of it.

It is a hard life, and not a very merry one, which the soldier leads, when he has a dancing dervish, with a large sword, in front of him, whilst he is being plastered in the back by a defective British shell. No one bears any grudge against the gunners, whether naval or military, though to be sure at the time perfectly appalling language is used ; because we know perfectly well that it is not their fault. For instance, once near Kabul we got quite a nice little bouquet of Horse Artillery shells in our backs. Profuse apologies from the Major, who in extenuation showed us his fuses, which were dated 1863. They had been in bin for sixteen years or so ! In South Africa we got it sometimes because we had pushed the Boers out rather quicker than our gunners expected, and being equipped with smasher hats, exactly like those worn by the Boers, not unnaturally were mistaken for them.

At Suakin it was something wrong with the charges, these also having been treasured up like old port. We were at the time in a zareba, just a few miles out of Suakin. To keep old fuzzy-wuzzy from making suicidal night attacks on the zareba, and also by way of giving us wholesome and secure sleep, H.M.S. *Dolphin* from her top-mast from time to time cast a searchlight over us into the bush beyond. When the gun crews got bored, or thought they saw live masses advancing to the attack, they popped large shells over us. These shells were of a size, as we thought, sufficient to sink a battleship. A great many of them, however, mercifully did not burst at all on impact, but just slithered along and were lost in the desert. Eventually perchance they blew up when inquisitive Arabs tried to make them into cooking pots or something of that sort.

One morning my own peculiar personal peril was brought home to me, when my syces between them bore to my tent

a huge shell, which they had found lying by my horses, and only 10 yards as the crow flies from my own head. It was evidently a little present from H.M.S. *Dolphin*, and I thought it rather a nice and kindly thought, and made plans to turn it into a trophy, to wit a standard lamp. So I told my syces to put it away under my camp bed. There it remained for some days, or a week perhaps, subject to many casual kicks and pokes, being rather in the way. One night, asked to dine on the *Dolphin* by a sailor friend, I thought I would take the shell down and obtain the advice of the experts as how best to turn it into a standard lamp wherewith to adorn my ancestral halls.

My two syces, with enormous groans and grunts, carried the shell down to the shore, where a boat was to meet the guests. The petty officer in charge of the boat viewed this boomerang shell with sour distrust. Indeed, being an expert in these things, he did not like it at all. As however his passenger was a guest of one of his officers, and this appeared to be part of his mess kit, the brave sailor allowed the shell to be gingerly placed on board the boat and equally gingerly handed up on to the deck of H.M.S. *Dolphin*.

After dinner, I broached the subject of the standard lamp to my sailor friend, and we went up on deck to look at the shell. My friend did not look long, but did remark with some vehemence—

“ You blasted idiot, it is a live shell, and percussion at that. Any decent kick on its fuse head would blow us all to glory. Here Mr. —— (to somebody in the offing), just lower this gently overboard.”

So my standard lamp went to the bottom of the sea, and is now no doubt the nucleus of a coral island. My sailor friend explained that the charge of powder must have been defective, and consequently the shell instead of carrying over the zareba had dropped short of it, happily on its side and not on its point. It then just slipped along over the hard surface, through the thorn bushes of the zareba, and came peacefully to rest by my horses.

There has been a good deal of mention of camels, and a certain amount about camelry, but it seems just possible that we ought to explore this subject a little further. There are camels at the Zoo, and also hundreds of thousands of people

saw one in *Chu Chin Chow* at His Majesty's Theatre. But the real articles, in their native deserts, and under their own blazing suns, are as unlike these sad and shivering objects, as is the Arab horse of the desert to his blood brother, exhibited in the cold gloom of the Agricultural Hall at Islington.

At Suakin in 1885, we had two brands of camels. One came from the deserts of India ; the other from the deserts of Arabia, or Africa. The Indian camel is a large majestic beast, which carries two men, tandemwise, on a double-seated saddle. The Arabian or African camel, as seen in Egypt, is in contrast a small highly-bred-looking little fellow, which carries only one man. The method of riding too is different. On the Indian camel the two riders sit astride, as on a horse, and have stirrups. On the Egyptian camel the rider sits with his legs crossed in front of him, round the pommel of the saddle ; so that his left foot hangs over the camel's right shoulder, and his right foot over the camel's left shoulder. The statue of Colonel Gordon, riding a camel, illustrates this latter seat. In both cases the rider sits loose and does not grip with his legs, as he would when riding a horse.

Cavalry consists of soldiers on horses, and Camelry consists of soldiers, and occasionally sailors, on camels. Our camelry at Suakin was mounted almost entirely on Indian camels. Lord Wolseley, or some other brainy officer, grasped the fact that for a desert campaign a camel which could carry two mounted men, *and* their kits, was more useful than a pony, which could only carry one man, and only part of his kit.

This brain wave was distinctly good, but when we came down to details many troubles arose.

The well-established idea in British bosoms is, that a camel is a hardy beast, which requires little food, and no water whatever—except perhaps at Christmas, or after the feast of *Ramzan*, or some annual festival of that sort. Whereas a camel in hard work, like every other living being, requires food to sustain him, and in his case not only stall feeding, but open grazing. As regards water, under the ordinary conditions of nature he requires as much, sometimes more, than other animals. For instance, he drinks, when not stinted, as much as a cow or a lion, and much more than a sheep or a goat. But by careful training over several weeks, or even months, he can be taught to go without water for some days at a time. This he can do

because nature has provided him with a second bladder, in which he can store water, and which he can pump up as required. But he has to be trained to store it by progressive abstinence.

One of the young subalterns of our lot, Jimmy Willcocks, aforementioned, who had charge of a mule corps, fearing perhaps that he and his lot would be left behind in the desert march, if this British idea regarding camels got too deeply rooted, boldly asserted that, with training, a mule also was capable of great abstinence in the matter of water. This is undoubtedly true, but on the other hand a mule is a very fastidious drinker, more so even than a horse. He may be extraordinarily thirsty, after a long hot march, but he may even then be seen turning from water, which a camel, or a horse, will drink greedily.

British sailors and British soldiers, many of whom may never have seen a camel before, even in the Zoo, and certainly few of whom knew how to look after him or ride him, were, by the magic stroke of the strategist's pen, turned into camelry. In a few days a sailor, or an infantryman, can learn to ride a camel, and did ; but as to the habits and wants of the beast, the predominating impression seemed to be that this admirable beast required no rest nor easement, little or nothing to eat, and certainly nothing to drink. The Indian soldiers who were turned into camelry were naturally a bit wiser, knowing something about camels, but the non-riding Oriental is a callous individual, as far as animals are concerned, and I don't know that the camels very greatly benefited by the little knowledge their Indian infantry riders possessed.

The camelry were formed into corps of so many troops, and on the march moved when possible in column of troops. In the open, when called upon to go into action, it was rarely that the whole corps (they were called corps, and not regiments, as a rule) was required in line. More often they would be required to send off troops to act here, or there. The troop, arriving near the scene of action, would dismount under cover in the bush, and each man would knee-halter his camel. It may perhaps be mentioned, that before dismounting the rider by giving utterance to various strange sounds, which he has learnt as part of his drill, induces the camel to sit down. It is no good, with a camel, to damn his eyes in English ; or *sacré bleu* him in French. These well-meant efforts will not

induce him to sit down, but the familiar hissings and invocations of the East will have the desired effect.

The camels, thus knee-haltered, are rather glad to sit down and have a rest, so that only one man, or at most two, per troop, need be left in charge of them. The dismounted soldiers, or sailors, now become infantry, using their rifles and bayonets to the best advantage. Being themselves fresh, and untired with marching on foot, they can put a little extra push into the affair. Then when the enemy run away, or they themselves feel outnumbered, or out-maneuvred, they can nip back to their camels, mount and dash off to fresh adventures elsewhere.

Having served with infantry, mounted infantry, cavalry, and camelry, I can unhesitatingly assert that the most comfortable form of warfare is on a camel, especially in a climate like that of the Soudan. On the bare saddle-tree were placed cushions of sorts, which served nicely as pillows at night. Over these could be spread the one, or two, blankets, which sufficed as bedding. Attached by various cords and straps, one could carry all sorts of luxuries, dangling round the saddle ; for no question of overburdening the camel came in. He could carry easily 400 lb. of dead weight, so that two live men, and their little luxuries, were a light and airy load.

Of these luxuries the greatest was a goodly-sized *chargul*, or skin bag, holding quite a nice lot of drinking water. As the ration of water was only a quart a day, for all purposes, on the march, it was an enormous score having this little reserve. On the march one became enormously popular with one's friends, who were foot-slogging alongside, for one could gladly give them a suck or two from the *chargul*. I made a friend for life of an officer in the Guards with this inexpensive drink.

The great disadvantage of a camel, as a war charger, is his height. It may, and does happen, that when you and your No. 2 are in a hurry to mount, due to the close and persistent attentions of several fierce fellows with swords and spears, who are prancing around the camel also being anxious to depart, springs prematurely to his feet. To mount him, thus standing, is quite impossible. So with one hand warding off the foe, with the other the anxious warrior tries to coax his steed to kneel again. A restive horse, under similar circumstances, is bad enough, but an active man, especially if encouraged by a

spear in rear, can swing up somehow. On to a standing camel it is as impossible to swing as on to the top of the dome of St. Paul's.

Under fire a camel is usually extraordinarily placid, especially if it is only the rip and smack of bullets, fired from afar, that he has to face. You hear a whistle overhead, you hear still more pronouncedly the shrill sound of a ricochet, and then maybe you hear a dead thud. That thud is a camel stopping a bullet. But the camel does not seem to notice the thud or the bullet very much. Of course, if the bullet has gone through a vital part, he dies ; or if it has hit a working part of his anatomy, or a joint, or bone, he discovers that he cannot get up when required ; but if it has merely gone through some fleshy or unconsidered part of his anatomy, such as his long neck, he takes no notice and goes on placidly chewing the cud, rather like an American chewing gum, and continues to gaze languidly on the surrounding scenery.

The camel had an undeserved reputation for being rather fiercer than a lion. He is, really, quite a mild beast, at ordinary times, but it so happened that we all rode stallions, and camel stallions, especially in the spring, are apt to be "must," as the natives call it, just as is a stag at certain seasons. It was thought, in those days, that a gelt camel was no good for hard work. Therefore it was impossible to have she camels amidst this rampant crowd of males, consequently all females were ruled out. Later experience has shown that a camel is just as useful and hardy when gelt as a stallion, so they are now used, and this also incidentally opens the ranks to she camels.

The Guards have been mentioned incidentally—we had two, if not three, battalions with us. In those days, the Guards were not very popular with the rest of the Army. No one quite knows why, but it was common knowledge that they were not. There was perhaps a sort of idea amongst the soldiers of the Line, that the Guards were only show soldiers, and had a jolly soft time, living all their lives in London with half-a-dozen pretty girls apiece, whilst other regiments took their turn on the foreign roster, and served for long years at a stretch all over the Empire, often in exceedingly hot, unhealthy and unpleasant places with no girls at all, or only black ones.

The wars in Egypt, however, served to explode that notion.

We all came to the conclusion that the Guards were the best regiments we had ever seen, even including our own old beloved corps. For it was not only in actual fighting, and discipline, that the Guards were so fine, but also in the drudgery of warfare, digging trenches, making zarebas, fatigue duty, unloading stores from ships, or whatever they were put to, they were absolutely first class.

The splendid qualities they showed in this, and many other small wars later, were however only preludes to the undying record of the Guards in the Great War. In this war they proved to be, without the smallest doubt, the finest troops that the world has ever seen, not excepting such famous fighting corps as the Roman Legions, or the Imperial Guard of Napoleon. Personally, I take off my hat, metaphorically only, or he might be embarrassed, to every private of the Guards I meet.

Our Chief of the Staff at Suakin was Sir George Greaves ; a fine old crusted soldier, very popular with all, and possessed of a wonderfully fluid vocabulary, of the older sort. We were having a bit of a battle one day, out at Tamai, and were drawn up in a hollow square, expecting the usual rush of armed spearmen bent on suicide. All the water for the force had to be carried with us on camels, and for this purpose some brave fellow in England had invented little iron tanks, each of which was half a camel's load, so that the two balanced each other, and rode neatly and nicely. But one thing the brave fellow had not thought of, was that the sun in the Soudan is very hot, and that iron, when exposed to its direct rays, gets easily heated.

The result was that all our drinking water, and we were only allowed a quart a day each for all purposes, was at the end of a march approximately at boiling point. To the gasping soldier, pining for a cool if brief drink, after a hot and strenuous day, this boiling cauldron was little short of a daily tragedy. On this occasion, whilst waiting for the onslaught, orders were given for all camels to be unloaded, and knee-haltered, for fear of a stampede. The water tanks, which were always specially guarded, were piled in one place, and a Sandhurst friend of mine, Allen by name, was placed in charge. I being a temporary invalid, having been knocked over by a spent bullet, was put in the shade, under this stack of tanks, and so

was in the front row of the stalls, for the little scene that followed.

Allen being a humane fellow, and having a very thirsty pony, and being for the moment in charge of a priceless treasure, tons of water; also perhaps counting on everyone else being busy with the battle, and risking the chance of one tank amongst so many being missed, cautiously unscrewed the tap of one tank, and holding a canvas bucket under it, filled the same with the precious fluid, and gave his pony to drink.

So far so good, more especially for the pony. But unfortunately, at this exact and inappropriate moment, there passed that way, intent on waging war, the Chief of the Staff, followed by his myrmidons.

Sir George Greaves was of a ruddy complexion, which was emphasised by a whitish moustache, whilst undoubtedly an ardent Soudanese sun had served to pronounce the contrast.

But at the sight of Allen, watering his pony with a fluid more precious than molten gold, the Chief of the Staff became almost pale. He certainly was speechless, till perhaps almost insensibly, he had mounted pulpitiwise on to the top of the pile of empty water tanks. Here, regardless of his exposed position, the good old soldier found his tongue, and his vocabulary. I dare not reproduce it, for fear of setting the printing press on fire; but brought down to cold colloquialism, the drift of the oration was this:—

Lieutenant Allen had, it seemed, committed many of the most heinous crimes in the military, or criminal calendar. He had not only betrayed his trust, robbed the bank, so to speak; but had jeopardised the lives of so many men, at so many quarts of water per head. It was really a very moving speech, and I, lying beneath it, was deeply impressed, and shed a silent tear or two for my friend Allen, and the sad fate that undoubtedly awaited him. There was no question about this, for Sir George Greaves passed the verdict.

“ You ought to be taken out and shot on the spot! ”

“ Anyway I cannot be on the shooting party,” I thought, and shed yet another tear for my poor friend Allen.

Allen, during this terrible ordeal, had stood strictly to attention, but I noticed with sorrow and regret, no sign of terror, or even of deep penitence on his young face. Rather

did it express a somewhat detached attention to the words of doom. This was indeed only the truth, for he had hardly noticed his death sentence, so intent was he on the loose pile of empty tanks, on top of which his revered chief stood in the aforementioned exposed position. Thus when the real climax arrived, and Sir George Greaves, like the judge just before he puts on the black cap, vociferated at him—

“And what have you got to say, sir?”

The lame, and hopelessly inadequate reply came from Allen—

“Quite so, sir, very sorry indeed, sir; but do take care, sir, you are in a very insecure position, sir. That pile is badly packed, may come down with a run any moment, sir.”

Sir George Greaves glared at Allen for a moment, but seeing that no impertinence, but only solicitude for his safety was meant; and being as quick to kindness as to wrath, climbed down off his precarious rostrum, and slapping young Allen fiercely on the back, remarked quite jovially—

“Well, don’t do it again, young fellow.”

Those empty tanks were a perfect nuisance all night to one in want of slumber. Of these I was one, being very weary, and sore about the chest, for every stray bullet all night long, seemed to hit those empty tanks, and go ricochetting and shrieking off somewhere, each time making noise enough to awaken any decently dead person.

The Australians were fine fellows, and as keen as mustard, on the fighting part of the business. But they had no use for discipline, in our sense of the term, which was really their weak point as soldiers. Here is an illustration. One day we were marching through the bush, the sole escort to the convoy being the Australian regiment. It was rather a hot day, and the pace of a loaded camel is slow. At first the men took off only their belts and coats, and threw them on to the camels of the convoy; but soon followed their ammunition and rifles. So that in due course there were some 500 men, quite unarmed, marching in their shirt sleeves, as guard to a convoy, which might be rushed at any moment.

The Colonel of the regiment, an old Regular, and Crimean veteran, was riding in front of the square, and diplomatically was mentioned to him the risk that was being run.

The Colonel, horrified, came back, and knowing his crowd,

reasoned with them in an amicable manner, and pointed out the danger of going along unarmed. He invited the men, at any rate, to carry their rifles, and some ammunition. The men took this advice in good part, and set to work to recover the essential parts of their equipment. But the march was long, and the day grew hotter, so that before very long nearly all the rifles, and ammunition, were back on the camels. Fortunately we were not attacked that day, or the Australians would have been badly mauled, if not annihilated, and several hundred camels would have been lost. My own opinion is that there should be only one brand of discipline, and not one for British soldiers and others, according to their fancies, for Australians or Canadians. When we are at war together, we should all be under the King's Regulations, and the Articles of War.

Australians may do foolish things, and so do British sub-alterns. I was one then, and did an extraordinarily rotten thing. Everybody was sick to death of bully beef and biscuits. Even in a cold climate, if the only daily provender, they pall on one ; but in spots where the sun is hot and the bully beef, instead of being nicely braced up, comes out of a hot tin, in a sort of loathsome greasy mess, one shies badly at it, however hungry.

In the bush round our zareba on one occasion, not very far afield, were small herds of gazelles, which did not seem to be greatly disturbed by the convoys passing to and fro. The same bush was also full of Arabs, looking out for a chance of pouncing on slackly guarded convoys. But they, and the gazelles, being old neighbours, did not take much notice of each other. So, being an ass, I thought I would sneak out one afternoon and get a gazelle or two for our little mess. As the return convoy of unloaded camels was going out of the zareba, I on my camel, with my syce mounted behind me, wandered out with it, and nobody took any notice of us. Once clear of officious observation, I broke away from the convoy, and slithered off into the bush to look for a gazelle.

Before long we saw a small herd, as tame as mice, which merely glanced at my camel with calm confidence. Dismounting behind a bush, I made a short stalk, and got an easy shot at a buck standing sideways on. He fell stone dead, and going forward to pick him up, what was our surprise to find,

just beyond him, another gazelle, also a buck, in his death agonies. I was using a Martini-Henry service carbine, with the ordinary solid service bullet. The second buck had been quite invisible to me, but the bullet, after going through the first buck, had carried on, and caught the second, which was standing at right angles to the first, in the chest, and had mortally wounded him. The two heads on one board, long hung as a curiosity on the walls of my old father's study.

Mightily pleased with this easy bag, we tied the carcasses on to the camel, and mounting set off leisurely towards the zareba. As before mentioned, in this seemingly open mimosa bush, you cannot really see more than about 50 yards in any direction, so craftily have the bushes planted themselves. Thus suddenly, we came across five Arabs seated under a bush, and as a camel with his padded feet makes no noise, they were as surprised as we were. Across my knees, I had the Martini carbine loaded, and at full cock, for that pattern had no half cock, or safety catch. Taking no chances, I upped this weapon, let drive into the middle of the Arabs, and clean missed the lot! My camel, though quite steady under fire, when kneeling, and knee-haltered, had never experienced the bang of a rifle at his very ear. He therefore nipped round, very nearly shedding the two of us into the arms of the enemy, and made off. The five Arabs, now on the victory run, came sprinting after us, firing with great heartiness. I could hear my syce, who was in the post of honour in the rear seat, piously ejaculating—

“God knows, but perchance these sons of perdition may hit me in the hinder parts.”

The Arabs of those days were shocking bad shots, and this lot were no better than the rest. So though they fired quite a lot of rounds, at quite short ranges, 50 yards or so, they missed both the syce's hinder parts and mine. Their sole success was to graze those of the camel. This however had the gratifying result of making him skip along faster than ever, so that in a very few minutes we were safe from view, in the friendly bush. By a wary detour we returned to the zareba, and in due course those two gazelles gladdened the cooking pots of more than one little mess—including that of the Officer Commanding.

Many years after this campaign was over, to be accurate,

about thirty years, I was staying with my sister down in Norfolk, and noticed one day under a tree in the garden a wooden chair, which somehow seemed strangely familiar to me. And so it proved to be.

In my camel corps were all sorts of people, who came from all kinds of trades and professions, none of which were remotely connected with camels. There were goldsmiths, and jewellers, and moneylenders, and hosiers, and sellers of grain, and confectioners, and there were also some carpenters. One of these last, being a noble fellow, and inwardly distressed at seeing his Sahib seated on the ground when at rest, set to work to make a chair for him. To procure the material he committed several crimes of a high military order. To wit, he stole two empty ammunition boxes ; he borrowed two or three tools, without asking the consent of the Ordnance Department ; and he weakened the defensive value of the zareba by purloining some hefty mimosa bushes out of it.

This latter crime alone meant death, in the most acute form ; for the Indian camp follower being an inveterate pilferer of firewood, it had been found necessary to enact extremely drastic laws to prevent our only defence being gradually used up, to cook the little dinners of these worthy fellows. Of course I knew nothing about the ways and means, and was suitably surprised and pleased, when one day my carpenter camel-man presented me with a most comfortable little folding chair. I then hardly appreciated what beautiful workmanship, and what excellent wood, had been put into this kindly little act of friendship.

The chair followed me about for numberless years, here, there and everywhere, without my taking much care of it, and finally somehow found its way to England, probably as a deck-chair on board ship. At home my old father annexed it, and when he died it drifted to my sister, who did not know, or had forgotten, its origin. For goodness knows how many years, probably fifteen, it had stood out in her garden, summer and winter, rain, snow, frost, or heat. And there it was when I recognised it, as sound as the day it was made, not a bar rattling, or a leg infirm. It is now nearly forty years old, and lives nice and comfortably, in a warm room in the Tower of London.

Most people have seen an historic picture, yclept "The

Rape of the Sabines," in which is portrayed the forcible evacuation of a large number of very plump females. Most of these, with the artistic camera full on them, look terribly frightened. Happily the artist was not there, when these same well-nourished ladies dismounted after a precarious ride of unknown length. For the most hardy lady, after riding a horse barebacked at a gallop, whilst clinging for dear life to the swashbuckler in front, cannot possibly arrive looking her best.

During this war, chance led us to take part in a similar feat of arms. A village, not very far away in the bush, came under the displeasure of the higher authorities for making raids, or harbouring raiders ; in fact, for making itself generally a nuisance. The edict went forth therefore that this village was to be surprised at dawn, the surprise party being conveyed to the scene of conflict on camels. It was a mixed force, as far as men went, British sailors (I think), marines, and soldiers, Indians, and friendly Arabs, the last-named predominating. A few light guns on camels also accompanied the force.

We made a long night march, during which one learnt to sleep peacefully on top of a camel. Not a bad place either, and much easier than sleeping on a horse, though that too is not an impossible feat. Just before dawn we arrived in the vicinity of the doomed village, and silently surrounded it. As the light grew stronger, our tame Arabs commenced firing in the air, with great courage, and financial recklessness—free British ammunition ; and shouted aloud the pæan of victory. Quite right too, for without further fighting the victory was won.

When glorious victories like this were won, it was the custom in those parts in 1885, for the spoils of the victors to include all the least hideous female relations of the vanquished. Tastes of course differ, so that it may safely be said that a girl considered good looking in the Soudan, would not run much chance of being forcibly carried off on a camel, or even in a taxi, from, say, Piccadilly Circus. Incidentally it is not the custom of British officers and soldiers to emulate the ancient Romans in this matter of female spoils.

To make everybody happy, and at the same time conform with local custom, it was proclaimed that the conquered females were to be the perquisite of our Arab allies. With the Sabine picture in one's mind, this seemed rather a brutal arrangement,

and we rather blushed for our superior officers, who had ordained these things. Still more did we blush for Mr. Gladstone, and other cosy old gentlemen living in the purlieus of Downing Street, who might have to answer questions in Parliament about it all.

The reality was a little disillusioning. After the rather fierce, but happily bloodless capture of the village, all the women thereof of any possible value, that is those ranging from eleven to forty years of age, were lined up, and one by one portioned off to our braves. Tears and lamentations, beating of breasts, and tearing of hair? Not at all! The selected damsels, far from showing the least disinclination for their horrid fate, treated the matter with, what seemed to us, unseemly levity. Thus Anna Maria, or Theresa, or both, might be seen riding off on a camel, seated behind the new bridegroom, not in tears, but roaring with laughter, and cracking jokes, assuredly quite unprintable. The only sad people seemed to be the women who were left behind. May it be mentioned, in a whisper, that inside our tame Arabs' zareba were free British rations for all, including the Sabines; whilst out in the bush villages the diet seemed to be decidedly poor. Hence possibly the merriment.

It is rather curious what upside-down views people who live in England all their lives, get of people, and conditions, in far-away countries, more especially Asia and Africa. Generally speaking, most people consider Sabine raids, slavery, and all that sort of thing, not very nice from a domestic, or even agricultural point of view. But a closer inspection somewhat alters the perspective. It was not, for instance, the actual bondage which brought slavery into its great disrepute, but the dreadful crimes and barbarities committed by the slave dealers, in getting their human merchandise to market. Many of us have met slaves, who have assured us that they would not be anything else, and looked down with contempt on salaried menials. Well treated, well fed, no pecuniary cares, domestic happiness, children, and not too much work to do, they were happy.

On this very matter of slaves we had rather a curious experience during this war. Towards the end of it we were sent up to Suez, with a shipload of camels, and told to sell them by auction. Incidentally the camels only fetched about 2s. 6d.

each ; but à propos of slaves, a British man-of-war arrived in port at this same time, with a cargo of rescued slaves on board.

The slave trade in East Africa was run on these lines. The slave hunters penetrated several hundred miles inland, and there by barter, or capture, secured the required number of slaves. These they usually caused to earn their rations, on the march to the coast, by carrying ivory and other marketable commodities. In that region Zanzibar was a great slave centre, and here slave merchants from Egypt would buy their requirements, and ship them up to Suez for disposal. Great Britain took a leading part in stopping this slave traffic, using small craft to intercept the slave dhows at sea, and granting prize money to the sailors for every slave rescued.

But here comes in rather a curious result. The slave dealer, when the trade was unrestricted, took his slaves to Suez, and either there, or at Cairo, or Alexandria, disposed of them to the best advantage ; that is to say, in the case of girls, to the fattest, and richest, pasha. There the matter ended. But when the British intervened, and these slaves were captured, or rescued shall we say, on the high seas, by Her Majesty's ships, a complication arose. They could not be repatriated, for no one, not even they themselves, knew whence they came, or could, by any chance, find their way back, through hundreds of miles of bush and forest. Moreover, in the attempt, they would most assuredly have been recaptured by other tribes, or by other slave-hunting gangs.

In this perplexity it was decided that they should be forwarded on to their original destination, which in this case was Suez, and that there kind and philanthropic people should be invited to find kind homes for them, as domestic servants, or agricultural labourers.

Now, by a curious coincidence, these kind and philanthropic persons proved to be the same rich pashas, who formerly could afford to buy slaves. So these piously blessing Allah, and the noble British nation, gratefully offered a happy home, more especially to the best-looking and plumpest females. The free gift of a commodity, which formerly had to be bought as a luxury, was a bargain dear to the Oriental heart.

“ Allah is great ! And the British nation is without doubt mad ! ” they exclaimed as they concluded the bargain, and pouched the maiden.

However, the British were not really such congenital asses as the pashas thought them. Great Britain had, here and now, in principle, broken the slave trade. For this consignment of slaves was handed over as free men and women, and not as slaves, to be bought and sold. Further, and in due course, the slave trade was in fact, as well as in principle, broken, and this by the sustained effort, both by sea and by land, of Great Britain.

It was a funny little campaign, this of 1885 in the Soudan. It was probably never meant to be a really serious one, by the politicians at home. They had to cover their tracks a bit, so as to escape from the angry clamour, raised by the people and papers of England, over what was known as the betrayal of Gordon. Thus the politicians in power made furious noises, and hurled terribly brave threats ; but when they thought that public attention was concentrated elsewhere, either on the county cricket championship, or something equally entralling, they quietly shuffled out of the business.

To us young soldiers, however, it was a useful experience, which none of us would willingly have missed. In those young days, it did not perhaps occur to us as strange that so much good British blood and treasure should be expended, for the benefit of a small number of, apparently, inefficient or ill-instructed gentlemen, who drew high salaries in the neighbourhood of Downing Street.

And so, after some nine months, back to India we went.

CHAPTER V

ON THE FRONTIER WITH THE GUIDES

REJOINING the Guides, in the autumn of 1885, the Colonel very kindly gave me a month's leave, though very short of officers. It was my first experience of a hill station, and thoroughly I enjoyed it at Murree. Good it was to see again an English lady, for English ladies east of Suez are like flowers in the desert. Doubtless I should, here and now, make a poem about them, but the requisite courage fails me, perhaps because my first effort caused me some physical pain. This was during my school-days at Clifton College, and the subject we were set was to indite "An Ode to Spring."

The first verse of my contribution on this thrilling subject, ran—

" The country is not dry and hard,
But soft and slippery as lard.
With thee in hand, I long to roam,
My silken locks ne'er touched by comb."

After the last line of this verse, the master had the questionable taste to write, in blue pencil, " You little beast ! " And at the end of the Ode, also in blue pencil, came an invitation to meet him in the " break." We all know what that means.

To get back to prose, that winter at Mardan was rather a busy one. All the tribes on our frontier seemed to be disturbed, and restless ; the Mohmands on our left, the Swatis in the middle, and the Bunerwals on our right. History is silent as to why the authorities, at such a time, sent off the Guides Cavalry, to cavalry manœuvres well out of reach, down Rawal Pindi way. This in itself was liable to augment the trouble, for the tribes in those parts knew the Guides well, their reputation was great, and the respect for their prowess was unbounded. But the moment they were moved away, though just as good regiments might take their place, the word went

round. "The Guides are away, let us now make hay" (poetry again), or words to that effect; and they generally did.

The same, on a larger scale, was observable all down the Frontier, when in later years the Punjab Frontier Force under Lord Kitchener's Scheme was removed from the Frontier, and replaced by regiments unaccustomed to deal with the truculent gentry who infest the border mountains.

With the Guides Cavalry away, and with the Corps Commandant, Colonel R. B. P. Campbell and several officers absent on manoeuvres, or on furlough, we were very short of British officers; so that those of us who were there had a busy time under Colonel Bob Hutchinson. This particular crisis found out one of the weak spots in the Corps of Guides, as originally organised by Lumsden. All British officers were then interchangeable between Cavalry and Infantry throughout their service. This in theory was a good thing, for it gave all officers a working knowledge of both branches. In actual practice it worked out, that when the Commandant went on furlough, it might so happen that a general post took place. The result being, that the Cavalry would be officered by Infantry officers; whilst those in the Cavalry took their places in the Infantry.

This general post happened, during a critical time, this particular winter. The Commandant of the Corps was away, the Commandant of the Guides Cavalry in consequence went over to command the Guides Infantry, whilst the *de facto* Commander of the Guides Infantry became in a night a cavalryman, and took off the Guides Cavalry to cavalry manoeuvres. I myself being in the Guides Cavalry, went across to act for Adams as Infantry Adjutant. As a result of the experiences of that winter, it became an established rule afterwards, that only young subalterns were interchangeable, and more senior officers were told off permanently to a Cavalry, or an Infantry career, in the Corps.

The fighting classes in India, and on its borders, are splendid men, brave and fearless in action; nevertheless, to be at their best, they require to be led by British officers. It does not seem to matter how young these officers are, but British they must be. So in all these little raids, or counter raids, one or more of us took part. I forget how many times I was out that

winter, but a good many. Here is an account of one occasion.

Colonel Hutchinson, known to us affectionately as "old Hutch," and Adams¹ were out shooting about 15 miles away. The senior officer, present in the station, was Colonel Arthur Broome, who, with a squadron of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, had been sent to do garrison duty, during the absence of the Guides Cavalry. In the afternoon came an express messenger from Rustam, a village 26 miles distant, at the foot of the border mountains, saying that a large force of Bunerwals had concentrated, with a view to sacking that village.

Deane,² who was the Political Officer at Mardan, deemed the matter so urgent, that he asked Colonel Broome to act at once. As soon as we were ready, which did not take very long, Colonel Broome sent me off, post haste in advance, with a couple of companies of Guides Infantry. Lorne-Campbell with the rest of the Infantry was to follow on, together with Colonel Broome, and his squadron of the 12th Bengal Cavalry. In those days, the Guides Infantry never halted at all during a march. They just trekked through as fast as they could, however long the march ; it might be 26 miles, as was this.

My two companies started at about 2 p.m., and got into Rustam soon after 8 p.m., covering the 26 miles in little over six hours. But on this occasion that was not all. Just before we reached Rustam, a mounted orderly caught us up, with further orders. These instructed us to push on into the mountains, and by using a goat track, known to the shepherds, to work round, so as to place ourselves behind a village just across the border, in which the hostile tribesmen were reported to be assembled for the contemplated raid. Rather weary we started off, after a brief rest, on an awful night march. It was pitch dark, and the path, such as it was, only 2 feet wide ; winding up and down, and along the most horrible places, through the rocky mountains. Our sole guide was one of our own Infantry, Bahjun by name, who was a villager of Rustam. He was indeed invaluable to us, but so dark was the night that he had every now and then to crawl on hands and knees to feel the path.

We were none too fresh when we started on this night

¹ Now Major-General Sir Robert Adams, V.C., K.C.B.

² Later Sir Harold Deane, K.C.S.I., Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province.

venture, but all night long we kept on without rest, creeping, crawling, staggering. At length, just as it became light enough to see the path, Bahjun announced that we were near our destined position. And here occurred a nice little episode, which shows the devotion which good Indian soldiers have for their British officers. To our left at this moment was a little conical, rocky hillock, only about 100 feet above us. Thinking I should get a better view from the top of it, without thinking and without taking an escort, I started up this hillock. The sharp eye of Samundar the Subadar,¹ at once spotted my movement, but he also suspected that there was a picket of the enemy, not improbably asleep, in the sungar on top.

In a moment, racing up the stony hill, with his sword drawn in his hand, came Samundar, and racing with him Bahjun and another, rifle in hand. Perfectly right they were, for approaching the sungar softly, we found the picket asleep and captured the lot, without a shot fired, or noise made. Had I blundered into the picket alone there would probably have been casualties, and certainly the alarm would have been given to the enemy. Without further adventure we in due course arrived at our destined position in rear of the village. As the light strengthened, we could see armed men strolling about in the village, quite unconscious of our presence.

Meanwhile most untoward happenings had occurred. Colonel Hutchinson and Adams, out on their shooting expedition, heard that the Guides had marched off suddenly to Rustam. They at once decided to make a straight dash for Rustam, distant about 20 miles, using bridle paths, instead of going back to Mardan, and round that way by road, a distance of 50 miles. They had nothing but what they stood up in, just their shooting kit, and arrived at Rustam in the middle of the night, just after Colonel Broome and the main body had arrived there. Colonel Broome had decided to push his main body up the valley beyond Rustam, so as to be in as advanced a position as possible, for attacking at dawn the village which my party had been sent to turn.

Arrived at the forward position desired, Colonel Hutchinson with a few of his men was evidently seeing about placing his pickets, when suddenly in the dark they stumbled across a party of the enemy. These in blind haste fired into Colonel

¹ The title of an Indian officer who commanded a company of infantry.

Hutchinson and his party at very close range and then fled to give the alarm. Most unhappily these few shots did great harm, for Colonel Hutchinson and two or three of his men were killed and others were wounded.

As the sun rose and daylight became strong, we, in our little eerie dominating the village, wondered what had happened. No signs of the frontal attack, and as we could now see more clearly, we noticed very few men in the village, whilst chickens and women and children were moving about. Then the awful thought struck us. We had missed our way and come to the wrong village! But we were reassured by Bahjun, who swore by Allah and all the Prophets, that we were in exactly the right spot. So we waited on, and our puzzlement increased, when our bugler declared that he could hear a bugle sounding the regimental call, followed by "G Company retire." After a bit we all heard this call, evidently blown by the massed buglers, and as one of the companies with me was G Company, the call was presumably meant for us.

We all cursed rather heartily, and looked back gruesomely at the mountain track we had come by. But then came one of those brain waves, which come occasionally to the least brainy. There were two ways of retiring, one back the way we had come, and the other by advancing through the enemy! Perhaps it is hardly necessary to add that we chose the latter alternative, not from excessive bravery, but from sheer weariness. Forming a line of battle we swept down through the village, driving all, chiefly chickens, before us, for the warriors had already fled. Then, working through the scrub bush beyond, we came suddenly upon a Guides bugler, going out to have another try at "G Company retire."

And so this, one amongst a hundred similar affairs, ended seemingly without much success. But though our effort to surround and capture the raiders had failed, yet the moral effect was great. It was made clear that isolated and seemingly defenceless villages, within the British border, could not be raided with impunity; for who could be assured, that instead of unarmed villagers, they might suddenly find they had to deal with the terrible and ubiquitous Guides. So that little portion of the Frontier remained quiet for many months, indeed years, after this sudden and dramatic appearance of the Guides, who were supposed to be sleeping peacefully 26 miles away.

Our welcome when we, the lost sheep, got back to the regimental fold, was quite touching ; for they thought we must all have been most assuredly scuppered, seeing and hearing nothing of us. We sadly missed dear old Hutch. He was not really very old, only about forty-five, but he had a bald head, a grey pointed beard, and had ever since he was a captain always been known as "the old 'un," or "old Hutch." The men were simply devoted to him, and he was, amongst other things, one of the best judges of a horse in India.

He had a wonderful knack of imparting this knowledge to us youngsters. Going round stables, or when a new batch of remounts arrived, he would point out the best, and worst, points in each. He would lay great stress on forelegs, fetlocks and feet ; for he said that either a trooper, or a polo pony, must be good in front to stand the strain of galloping on hard ground. In England, by all means look more carefully to hocks, for they are required for jumping, and the forelegs are not quite so important, the ground being soft. Feet, in England, are often passed by with a glance, but for work on hard stony ground, sound, good, hard shell, with no rings in it, are highly to be desired. Then he would point out a horse in the ranks, that had done sixteen solid years under a trooper, and was still as sound as a bell.

"That's the class of horse to get into your head, and buy when you get the chance." And we tried to fix that horse in our memories.

Some people are born judges of horses, and some never learn. We had rather an amusing instance of one of the latter. He had, somehow or other, been appointed as a member of a committee, which was going round India buying remounts. Some of us youngsters were at the time attending a course of lectures on Veterinary lore, given by a leading light in the Veterinary Service. The lecturer at one lecture gave us with diagrams a presentment of the perfect horse ; not a bad point about him, Pegasus, the Godolphin Arab, and Persimmon all rolled into one.

The above-mentioned Remount Committee Officer, who was assisting at the lectures, said that before the next lecture, he would produce an Arab horse in his possession, which practically answered the description given by the lecturer. Next day we were all standing about outside the doors of the lecture hall

waiting for the clock to strike. With us was the leading Veterinary light, who was giving the course of lectures. Looking casually along the Mall, we saw a syce, leading a small Arab horse towards us. Our lecturer also saw the horse, and by way of improving the shining hour at once took up his parable.

"Now, gentlemen, kindly look at that horse being led towards us. He has all the bad points it is possible to enumerate. You will observe that he turns out his toes and is too long in the fetlock. His feet are too long, you will observe, and his shoeing is long overdue. Notice the low, slouching way he carries his head. I think, when he comes alongside, you will find he has a bad shoulder. Yes, I thought so. Now look at him sideways. He has no depth and is short of a rib. Now come behind. As I thought. Cow hocked and goose rumped. Quite sound, probably, but a bad horse."

Standing amongst us, unseen by our lecturer, was the Remount Committee man, who had promised to show us his perfect horse. This was it ! Curtain !

To get back to the Rustam affair, from which we have somewhat wandered. The call on my own physical endurance had not however yet ended, for it was my turn to take over next day the command of Fort Abazai, distant 58 miles. To do this it was necessary, after a meal and an hour's sleep by the roadside, to mount and away. The 26 miles into Mardan was covered that afternoon, and there I slept like a log till next morning, and then quite fresh again rode the other 32 miles.

Fort Abazai was one of those mud forts common to the Frontier. A central keep surrounded by ramparts with a deep dry ditch, making a secure stronghold against tribesmen, armed only in those days with muzzle-loaders, and possessed of no artillery. The size of these forts varied according to the size of the garrison considered necessary. Some were big enough to hold a regiment of infantry, and a squadron of cavalry, and had, mounted on the bastions, various elderly pieces of ordnance. Others were quite small, for which anything from twenty men to a company of infantry sufficed as a garrison.

Fort Abazai had originally been built for the larger garrison, mentioned above, but the improvement in rifles and musketry training in the Army had made it possible for this large fort

to be held by a company of infantry and a troop of cavalry. In command there was always a British officer, relieved fortnightly ; so as the duty was not very popular it was naturally a point of honour, whatever the difficulties, to turn up punctually to relieve the preceding victim in solitary confinement. It was my old friend Raleigh Egerton,¹ who had to be relieved. We had served together in the old 17th Foot, and were now together again in the Guides, so I made extra certain of riding in to the tick. The news I brought was the first he had heard of our little fray at Rustam, and mounting his horse off he went to take my place.

Fort Abazai is on the banks of the Swat River, just where it issues from the mountains, and dominates a ferry, and fords, which raiders from the Mohmand country would like to use, as well as the head works of the Swat Canal, built by us. Whilst I was there a letter came from an officer at Meerut, asking for a copy of a Fort Abazai Order, issued in 1863 by General Cotton. Apparently in those days a rifle was a new weapon, not issued to the Army, but possessed by a few officers for sporting purposes. One such officer, to beguile the tedium of his tour of duty at the Fort, used to practise with this new toy, from one of the ramparts. He generally chose a stone or some conspicuous mark across the river, but one day, not having the least notion that his bullet would carry so far or do any damage when it got there, had a cock shot at a gentleman of colour, who was strolling about in the far distance. By some extraordinary chance he hit this gentleman, not badly, but certainly enough to annoy him intensely. The outcome was the famous Order :

"The custom of shooting at Natives across the river is reprehensible, and should be discontinued."

To while away the time I had a canoe built, made of ox-skins stretched over a wooden framework, in which one could go fishing, or duck shooting. This canoe I used to leave at Abazai for the use of my brother officers.

The canoe had been made-to-measure, so to speak, for me in the Canal workshops, and it so happens that I have a small foot. Fred Campbell,² one of my brother subalterns, happened to have rather a long foot ; so that one day when he was out

¹ Now Lieut.-General Sir Raleigh Egerton, K.C.B., K.C.I.E.

² Now General Sir Frederick Campbell, K.C.B., D.S.O.

in the canoe, and it turned turtle in a rapid, his foot got jammed under the fore-deck, and there he was head downwards, in deep water, with the blessed canoe acting as buoy to his feet. Drowned he most certainly would have been had not the same alert Subadar Samundar, who saved me from a nasty cut or two at Rustam, seen the catastrophe. He promptly dived into the river, and swimming out rescued Fred Campbell from his perilous position, and brought him safe to shore.

Subadar Samundar was granted the Humane Society's Medal for this prompt and gallant rescue. He was really a very fine type. I don't quite know what his parentage was, and am not sure that he knew himself, but his mother was probably a Kashmiri, and his father a Yusafzai Pathan. He was light complexioned, with a light brown beard, blue eyes, and was sturdily built like an Englishman. In English clothes, and after the sunburn had worn off, he could have passed as an ordinary Englishman much addicted to outdoor sports.

He was one of those men, who somehow have it in their blood, always to be at the right spot at the right moment, and ready to act. He had won the Star for Valour, the highest award then open to an Indian, brilliantly in action. But it did not seem to matter what the occasion was, whether great or small ; a company entangled on parade, a mule down with his load, a stiff enemy to knock out, or a man to be saved from drowning, Subadar Samundar was always there. A fine fellow.

Talking of Fort Abazai reminds me that a word more was promised about my old dog Baz, which had been bought at Allfrey's sale in Afghanistan. He followed me about everywhere, and naturally took his turn at the outposts, when my turn came. A little later I had to go home on sick leave, and left Baz with Cooke-Collis, or Raleigh Egerton, I forget which. But he was restless in his mind, and thought old master had gone off somewhere and had forgotten him. So one morning early he slipped off, and made a systematic search of all the forts on our outpost line, and those guarding the Canal. The furthest off was Fort Abazai, a 32-mile trek, but arrived there, he just searched round for old master, had a drink, but would take no food ; a short nap, and then off again on his quest.

Every post he visited, but after looking round for master and

not finding him continued on his way. At length, after many days, thin, faint, and hungry, he thought in his old doggy mind, "Perhaps old master is at Mardan after all, I'll go back and see."

Baz was nearly at the end of his long, hot, dusty march, when a few miles from Mardan he had to pass a village, standing on a mound, wherein dwelt all his most deadly enemies, large yellow pariah dogs. We had often passed this village on our way out coursing, and Baz in his prime, would simply turn on those whelpers, and bowling over one or two, scatter the rest in flight. But it was a different story now. A poor tired old dog, mere skin and bone, and faint with hunger, just slogging along slowly, in the hot dusty road.

"Ha ! ha !" said the brave pariahs, "this is the sort of battle we like."

So half a dozen of the biggest and boldest sallied forth, and hurled themselves on poor old Baz. The old dog fought well and bravely, but the odds were too great, and the great yellow beasts bore him down and killed him.

Then came that way a kindly damsel, on her way to draw water from the well. And she, seeing the turmoil, shouted, "*Kuré, kuré,*" which being interpreted is, "You dog ! you dog," and the pariahs fled. For usually this word of warning or reproach, is accompanied by a brickbat, heftily aimed.

Seeing a dead dog on the road, the damsel was passing by, when she noticed that the dog had round its neck a collar of leather, with a brass plate on it. Now no dog but a Sahib's dog wears a collar. "And how great must the Sahib be to place a brass plate on his dog's collar !" So the damsel stooped down and unfastened the collar and took it to her home, and showed it to her friends. But these were much affrighted, and said—

"Conceal this matter lest trouble shall come to thee and on this village, in that a great Sahib's dog has been killed and lies by the well."

So Baz was secretly buried, and his fate would ever have been a mystery had it not been for a young warrior of the Guides, who belonged to this very village.

It chanced not long after, that this young warrior came to his home on three days' leave ; and his women folk, knowing

that he was a friend of the Sahibs, and acquainted with their ways, told him of the tragedy of the dog.

"Bring hither that collar," said the young warrior, "and I will so arrange that the wrath of the Government shall not fall on you."

So when the young warrior returned from leave, he brought the collar with him, and told the story of Baz's death.

"And truly he fought with great bravery, and his end was that of a soldier in battle. May God curse the ill-conditioned curs and sons of curs that killed him."

The life at a frontier fort is generally hopelessly dull, and it is only the lucky officer, now and again, who comes in for an interesting scrap. Even going out on false alarms seemed better than nothing at all, and anyway it kept everyone alert and ready. The villages within reasonable distance of the frontier, are sufficiently panicky to summon troops to their assistance on the slenderest pretext. Under the *pax britannica*, by wheeze, or squeeze, or whatever it was, the villagers on our side of the border were peremptorily invited to give up their arms. This on the grounds that it was now Her Majesty's intention to guard them against all oppressors and villains, from over the way across the border.

The real motive was to remove all firearms, swords, daggers, and other dangerous weapons from the hands of those who were only too prone to use them on each other, whenever they got unduly excited. Moreover, these arms were a source of constant anxiety to Her Majesty's soldiers, who might, quite accidentally, be shot in the back by too zealous or even not sufficiently appreciative villagers. This disarmament scheme had its disadvantages, as well as advantages, for the villagers saw a mare in every nest and thought it not bad fun, and adding to their own importance, to call out the troops as often as possible. Incidentally the troops would spend some money in the village, besides affording a free military spectacle, much appreciated by the small boys and women.

My brother Leslie, about this time, was Adjutant of the 19th Bengal Lancers, stationed at Jhelum. During a temporary absence, his first charger, a Waler, as Australian horses are called in India, broke out of his stall, and disappeared into the continent of India. Some men of the regiment were immediately sent off to search for the missing steed. Leslie's

HISTORY OF A TELEGRAM



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orderly conveyed this unpleasing news to him, in a telegram, which read—

To Adjutant J. Hashmin,
Regiment No. 19.

Large wella horse run away Defadar Baghwan Singh pursued.

The little difference in designation between L. Young-husband and J. Hashmin, and the fact that there were several 19th Regiments, did not interfere with the delivery of the telegram, much to the credit of the telegraph department, doubtless inured to such vagaries.

This incident inspired an exceedingly inferior sketch which demonstrates at any rate how badly I draw.

Here, perhaps, may suitably be told the unfortunate further career of syce Khan Mahomed, the same who nearly set fire to our ship, on the way to Suakin. One night, whilst we were at dinner in the Mess, one of the servants came in, and whispered a message to the Colonel. I don't think the Colonel quite caught what he said, for he merely looked across the table and said to me—

"Some trouble about one of your syces. Better go and see what it is."

It was a pitch-dark night and, coming out of a bright room, I could see nothing at all.

"Well, what is it?" I asked.

A voice, which I recognised as that of Khan Mahomed, out of the darkness said—

"I will surrender to none but my Sahib."

Then dimly I saw a figure, clothed in white, holding a naked sword.

This mechanically I took, and noticed, when the light from behind me fell on it, that it was covered with blood. It seemed also strangely familiar to me when I gripped the handle.

And familiar it was, for it was my own war sword, a curved scimitar with a razor edge, which my forbears had handed down to me, and which I wore when any fighting business was on hand.

As my eyes got accustomed to the dark, I made out a circle of men of the Guides with swords drawn, and carbines thrust forward, surrounding the white figure on three sides.

Then up spake an Indian officer.

" This man, who is your Honour's syce, has slain two women in the bazaar, and as he came down the street wounded others who stood in his way. Hearing a turmoil, the Mess Guard turned out and barred the way. The cause of the disturbance was explained to me, and I ordered the man to halt and give up his arms. But he answered with harsh words and abuse, and said—

" 'To Hell with you. I will have words only with my own Sahib.'

" Thus we surrounded him, that he should do no more mischief, and thus guarded he arrived at the feet of your Lordship."

Feeling rather annoyed at my sword having been taken, and the general hullabaloo that had arisen, I asked the Khan Mahomed rather severely, what the doose he meant by it. This was his story :

" Sahib, when we were at the war in Egypt, I had free rations and nothing to spend my money on. So I asked your Honour to save up my pay, and give it to me when we arrived back at Mardan. This your Honour did. It was a large sum of money, and I decided to spend some of it on buying a wife. Knowing Shagun Bibi had a beautiful daughter, I went to her, and made proposals. After much bargaining it was decided that I should marry her daughter, on payment of Rs.90.

" This sum I paid to the old whore, but being unaccustomed to business took no receipt. Then this old strumpet, may she burn in Hell ! sold her daughter to someone else, and declared she had never received one single rupee from me. I was filled with rage and, making my plans, went to Ram Baksh, your Honour's bearer, and said—

" ' The Sahib has sent me to fetch his sharp sword, the one he wears in the wars, for he wishes to show it to his guests at the Mess House.'

" Ram Baksh, after a few inquiries, gave me the sword. With this sword concealed under my coat, I went to the house of Shagun Bibi and at once slew her. I also slew her daughter, for she was an accomplice. Then making my way into the street, I started to make my way across the frontier, and thus escape the English law.

"But people impeded me, so I again drew the sword, and tried to force my way, till the Guard with rifles stopped me, and threatened to shoot me. Being now helpless, I said I would surrender only to your Honour, and thus was I brought here. Your Honour knows my case, and justice will be done to me."

The East is rather a curious place, where different ideas prevail, especially as regards the taking of human life. Anyway Khan Mahomed had served me well, and had looked after my horses to my entire satisfaction, so when his case came up for trial, I thought that I might spring a month's pay on getting up a barrister from Lahore to defend him. This lawyer was so skilful that he got Khan Mahomed off with transportation for life to the Andaman Islands. That sounded terrible enough, and I felt sorry in a way for Khan Mahomed. Imagine, therefore, my surprise, not ten years later, to come across Khan Mahomed engaged as a syce to an officer on the Malakand Pass!

I shut my eyes resolutely, and passed by on the other side. Did I do wrong? Was I compounding a felony? I don't know, and really don't care. I was not going to give my old syce away.

There were many fine fellows in the Guides, but none finer than Ressaldar-Major Prem Singh, commonly known as "Bakshi," because he it was who held the keys of the treasure chest, and issued therefrom large bags of rupees on pay days. Prem Singh must have been considerably over sixty years of age at this time, which is old for the East. He was very fat, so fat indeed that several lusty young troopers were required to hoist him on to his charger. So stout was he that he could not stretch round his front to draw his sword with his right hand, but had to drop his reins and draw with his left hand. Yet once in the saddle, with his sword drawn, he was all there, and as brave as a lion.

He was a fine rider, and had been a noted swordsman in his day; but now he used to leave the killing part of the business to the young braves behind him. When it came to charging he would lead his troop with tremendous dash, but steadily holding his sword at the "carry." He neither attempted to defend himself nor to slay the enemy.

"I am too old for that sort of thing," he would say. "I

just lead the young warriors, and leave them to do the killing." And they did.

Nor would they allow a hair of that old hero, or of his charger, to be touched. Woe betide any who attacked him ; dead as mutton became that incautious fellow.

How Prem Singh came into the Guides at all is a curious story. When Lumsden raised the Guides, he would have none but proved fighting men ; and these were drawn only from the most martial tribes, the bravest of the brave. But few of these warriors of the sword could read or write, they just managed to sign their pay sheets with a cross, so— X. Thus Lumsden, who himself loathed accounts and office work, found that the accounts of his Corps were liable to get into an unhallowed state of confusion, even chaos. Being a man of resource, he decided to enlist some men, regardless of the fighting reputation of their class, to run the accounts of the Corps.

Now there are Sikhs and Sikhs. There is the Sikh of the fields, the Jât Sikh, who holds a reputation for martial valour second to none ; and there is the Khâttri Sikh, a trading Sikh, owning perchance a small shop in the bazaar, but, in those days, with no reputation (God forbid ! he would probably say) for valour. He was however, both by birth and training, singularly agile in the totalling up of figures and in the keeping of accounts. Amongst the first batch of Khâttri Sikhs enlisted by Lumsden was Prem Singh. So successful did this squad prove, not only in the baser business for which it was enlisted, but also in fighting, sword in hand, astride a fiery war-horse, that their numbers were increased to twenty-five, and the business of the Corps was entirely run by them.

Even in later years officers from other regiments might be heard exclaiming, in pained horror—

"Good God ! You don't mean to say you have a Khâttri Sikh as Ressaldar-Major!"¹ And went away with a pathetic sort of feeling that the good old Guides must indeed have come to a sorry pass to have fallen to a Khâttri for their Ressaldar-Major.

During one tour of duty at Fort Abazai, a very unfortunate tragedy occurred. The standing order was, that when "retreat" sounded, the garrison was to fall in for roll call. The Indian officers were to attend and ascertain by inspection

¹ The highest rank amongst Indian officers in those days.

that all men were present, and had their rifles and ammunition complete. This was partly an ordinary military precaution, but also to make quite sure that no rifles or ammunition were missing. Apart from loss by carelessness, the rifle thief on the frontier is extraordinarily clever. He will steal out of your bed a rifle lying close beside you. He will steal one off the shoulder of a sentry on duty. He will steal arm-racks of rifles out of a barrack-room full of soldiers.

This was a paying business, for Government rifles, which were turned out by the thousand, at £2 10s. apiece, were worth £50 in the open market across the border. As Fort Abazai lies within a few hundred yards of the frontier, we had to be sharper than ever looking after our arms.

One morning it was reported that a rifle and two packets of ammunition were missing when the roll call was held at "reveille." Before the Court of Enquiry, both the Subadar, Ahmed Gul, and the Jemadar, Jumma, swore that they had both been present at roll call at "retreat" the evening before, when all rifles and ammunition were present, and correct.

It came out later that the Subadar had not been at the roll call at all, and that the Jemadar had told a lie to screen his senior. They were both ordered by the General Officer Commanding the Punjab Frontier Force to be tried by General Court Martial. An Indian officer may elect to be tried either by a Court composed entirely of British officers, or by one entirely composed of Indian officers. Subadar Ahmed Gul elected to be tried by Indian officers, and Jemadar Jumma by British officers.

The two Courts were, in due course, held simultaneously at Abbottabad. Neither was in communication with the other, nor had any knowledge of its proceedings. The Indian Court Martial sentenced Subadar Ahmed Gul, the chief offender, to loss of six months' seniority, a very mild penalty. The British Court Martial sentenced the more or less venial junior officer, one who had told a lie to screen his senior, to be cashiered, a very severe penalty. Was there ever such a tragedy!

But it did not end here. Subadar Ahmed Gul, who was a brave old officer, distinguished in many a war and hardy adventure, could not bear the stigma of having been tried by Court Martial. His *izzat*, his name and fame, had gone for ever. Better die than live. And so he died, with that curious capacity

which an Oriental seems to possess, of passing out of this world when he has that strong desire. Before the verdict and sentence, mild as it was, of the Court Martial was promulgated, Ahmed Gul was deaf to it, he was dead.

Jemadar Jumma, who had, to the Eastern mind at any rate, committed the merely venial crime of telling a lie to shield his superior officer, found himself cast on the world, disgraced for life, with only a month's pay in his pouch. Jumma was a historic person, immortalised by Rudyard Kipling as Gunga Din, the *bhisti*.¹ At the Siege of Delhi, in 1857, he was with the Guides during that desperate period, at the hottest time of year, in the hottest region on earth, as a camp follower, a *bhisti*. Not a soldier at all, but a humble regimental servant, a carrier of water for the soldiers, engaged on a *monthly* salary of six shillings.

After one of the fiercest fights in which the Guides were engaged during the siege, all had done splendidly, and it was decided by the General that to mark the occasion, one Order of Merit, the highest decoration for valour, should be bestowed on the men collectively ; and that they should vote amongst themselves as to whom the coveted medal should be given. With one accord the soldiers voted that the medal should be given to Jumma, the *bhisti*. For they said—

“ We are soldiers and it is our bounden duty and in accordance with the oath which we swore when we entered the service of the Great Queen to be brave, and fight, and suffer great hardship by land and by sea. But this man is not a soldier, and has no such obligation. Yet, quite unarmed as he was, and unafraid of the bullets of the enemy, he carried his great *mussack*² of water up to the most forward line, and gave us to drink, when we were nearly dead with the heat, and the exhaustion of fighting. Therefore this man is the bravest of all.”

Further, the men petitioned that Jumma, though a menial and belonging to no fighting class, might be enlisted in the Corps as a soldier. Those who know the East and its drastic caste distinctions, will appreciate more highly this great tribute to courage.

So Jumma was enlisted, and so fine a fellow was he, that in

¹ Water-carrier.

² A leather skin about the size of a sheep.

spite of his humble origin, and in spite of caste prejudices, he rose to be an Indian officer. Nor did he become less brave as he rose in rank ; for in the battles round Kabul, in 1879, some twenty-two years later, he gained the rare distinction of a clasp to his Star for Valour. Yet here he was disgraced, and practically penniless. But the old brave Jumma was not dead yet.

One day, not long afterwards, Colonel Jenkins of the Guides was walking down Jermyn Street, in the town of London, when he came across a crowd, blocking the pavement and half the roadway. He was crossing over, to avoid this, when he saw, upraised above the heads of the crowd, a pair of Eastern hands, and heard a voice speaking in a foreign tongue. Getting closer, he heard the voice exclaiming, in Hindustani, not one word of which, naturally, did the bystanders understand—

“A great injustice has been done to me. I am a stranger, amongst strangers, and will do no harm. Only show me the way to the Palace of the Great Queen that I may lay my petition before her.”

Catching sight of the speaker’s face, to his unbounded astonishment Colonel Jenkins recognised Jumma, and began working his way through the crowd. Jumma suddenly saw his old Colonel, and dashing forward would have thrown himself at his feet. But the Colonel restrained him, and said quietly to him in Hindustani—

“Come with me to some place apart that we may take counsel together.”

A passing four-wheeler gave an opening for escape, and a stalwart sympathetic policeman made a way for them. Arrived at the Colonel’s rooms, Jumma told his story.

“It seemed to me that great tyranny had been exercised over me, for I, a mere Jemadar, told a lie to help the Subadar Sahib, who was over me. So I determined to place my case before the Great Queen, knowing that she is merciful and of great wisdom. I had little money, only a few rupees, and the sea was very far off. Some said more than 1,000 miles from my home. But I was determined to arrive at the door of the Great Queen. So I took menial employment, here and there, so as to earn enough to fill my belly ; and sometimes even enough to travel some little distance by train. But the greater part of those 1,000 miles I travelled on my feet.

Arrived at the town of Bombay, which is on the banks of the great sea, I made enquiry as to the best road by which I could reach England. Everybody laughed at me, and said—

“ You are a simple fellow, without doubt. There is no road to England ; but by paying many rupees you can get on to a ship, which is like a train that moves upon the water. And this fire boat, after about a month, will carry you to England.”

“ But I had no rupees, and only a few copper coins left, so I became a coolie, at the side of the sea, and earned enough money to pay for my food. Then one day I was conversing with a Punjabi, who came off one of the ships, and told him of my case and desire. He said—

“ There is no difficulty if you become a fireman, such as I am.”

“ I said I would become a devil, if that would help me to arrive in England.

“ So the Punjabi, to whom I gave a small present, told the chief of the firemen that one of his friends was desirous of becoming a fireman on that ship when next it went to England. By good fortune they were short of firemen on that ship, and as it had to start very soon, the chief fireman enlisted me. The sea is a wonderful place, and my inside became upside down, and the heat in the engine-room was greater than the heat of the sun in the hot weather in the Punjab.

“ Yesterday, by the Grace of God we arrived at England, and straightway, having put on clean clothes and washed myself, and trimmed my beard, I started to walk to the Palace of the Great Queen. After two days' walking, so great is the size of this town, I had not reached the Palace, when your Honour saw me enquiring the way. Happily the crowd was unarmed, but though I am not one to be afraid, yet I wished not to be killed before I had laid my petition at the feet of the Great Queen, the dispenser of justice.”

Colonel Jenkins explained to Jumma that the Queen of England did not sit outside Buckingham Palace dispensing justice, as might a Rajah, but that she had very wise ministers, who first heard the case and then, if worthy, brought it to the notice of the Queen.

“ How many rupees shall I have to give to the Minister as a bribe ? ” enquired Jumma, with great directness.

The Colonel assured him that the Secretary of State for India would not require any rupees as a bribe.

"Perchance?" replied Jumma, dubiously, in his heart of hearts feeling sure that his kindly Colonel was going to bear the expense himself, and that probably a very large bag of rupees would be required to assuage the rapacity of Lord Granville.

Jumma was probably still further confirmed in this view, when the Colonel, taking him to the India Office, explained the case to the officials. For he was kindly received, and a patient hearing was given him. And as a result, Jumma was placed on a ship, this time as a passenger and not as a fireman, and was given money from the Great Queen for his expenses by the way. And when he arrived in India he was given a post of trust and authority in the Canal Department, and lived in fair plenty and contentment for the rest of his days.

It is of historic interest to record that two of the Colonels of the Guides invented two portions of the military equipment of a soldier which have spread throughout the armies of the world. As far back as 1846, Colonel Harry Lumsden invented khaki uniform. Hitherto the British Army had worn scarlet, or dark blue, or dark green, all very conspicuous colours in the drab surroundings of a battlefield in India, and also exceedingly hard to keep clean. Being a sportsman himself, he noticed how nature always provided bird and beast with a coat that blended with its surroundings, and thus made it less conspicuous when on the warpath, whether as hunter or hunted.

Being a man not only of ideas, but one who put them into practice, he thereupon clothed the Guides in a uniform which blended with the dusty plains and drab rocks of India. He called this uniform "Khaki," or dust-coloured. The Guides, and the regiments of the Punjab Frontier Force, alone wore this uniform till the Afghan War of 1878-81. It then came into general use by all regiments on active service in Eastern campaigns. Thence it spread to Africa, China, and finally to Europe. So that in the Great War millions of soldiers, belonging to nearly every nation on earth, wore khaki of one shade or another. It makes one dizzy to think what Colonel Lumsden's fortune would have reached if khaki had been a well-protected patent.

The other inventor, whose invention has been universally adapted, was Colonel Sam Browne, V.C., later General Sir Sam Browne. He also was a Colonel of the Guides, and finding that the long sword slings, and the sabretache necessary to keep a mounted officer's sword from banging about, rather an encumbrance, invented the Sam Browne belt, worn by hundreds of thousands of officers, of all nations, in the Great War. Again one trembles to think of the fortune which a small royalty would have brought in to Sir Sam Browne.

Sir Charles Macgregor, the Quartermaster-General, had been acting in command of the Punjab Frontier Force this rather troublous winter (1885-86), and on several occasions had been down to Mardan, when any larger complications arose. On his advice it had practically been decided that, in the spring of 1886, the Bunerwals should be brought to book for their many transgressions. They were distinctly above themselves, in fact, and openly and murderously defied the Government.

Now the only way to deal with frontier tribes, or indeed nations of any colour (varying from the coal black of the African, through the *café au lait* of some Asiatics, to the yellow of the Mongolians) is, when they show the least signs of being uppish, to hit them straight, and true, and hard, between the eyes—so to speak.

But there are all sorts of funny people in England, politicians, and cranks, and people who love writing resounding rubbish, who suffer from chronic mental myopia. So that though Sir Charles Macgregor, who was on the spot, knew exactly what was required, others who were not on the spot, and some of whom probably knew nothing at all about the matter, called a halt. Sir Charles Macgregor therefore went back to Simla, and the problem simmered on for another ten years.

Sir Charles Macgregor took a fancy to the Guides, and in passing it may be mentioned effected a somewhat curious reform. Hitherto the officers of the Guides had never worn uniform at mess, but always mufti. What the origin of this custom was is not quite clear. Originally there was no mess dress, and that sufficiently accounted for no one wearing it. Later there was an authorised mess uniform, but it was only worn when the General, or other magnate, was dining with the Corps. Anyway, there and then, at Sir Charles's

suggestion, the Guides took to wearing mess dress nightly, and have worn it ever since.

Another form his fancy for the Corps took, was to ask the Colonel to send an officer to the Quartermaster-General's department in Simla, so that he might be trained for Staff work. In India in those days, the Quartermaster-General undertook all the war work, which is now performed by the General Staff. It was an appointment which rising men like Lord Roberts, aspired to and held. Nobody else in the Guides seeming particularly anxious to go to Simla, though all were first-class officers, and just the men Sir Charles wanted, it fell to my lot to be sent.

There were four of us young subalterns who thus came together at Simla, A. C. Yate of the Baluchis, the *chikore*¹ we called him, because he had red legs, or rather red trousers covering them ; W. H. Low of the 7th Dragoon Guards ; Robertson of the Central India Horse, known to us as the Pink 'Un, partly because he had red hair, and partly because he had a fine flow of little stories, which would have done credit to that sprightly journal ; and myself, who achieved a sad notoriety in Rudyard Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

Probably I was the only person in Simla who did not know who "Very Young Gregson" was. At least, one would have thought that one's brother subalterns, that robust breed which is above all things candid, would have let one know all about it frequently, early, late, and at mid-day. It was only years later that the secret was revealed to me ; which shows how exceedingly clever Rudyard Kipling was in amusing everyone with his "Tales," without offending anyone.

As a rule Rudyard Kipling wove two, or three, or more, people together to produce a type. So that each of the component parts readily took to him, or her, self the most flattering part of the character, and with great certainty bestowed upon their friends the less attractive features. So everyone was pleased, and Rudyard Kipling had no bricks thrown at him. It was Mrs. Hawksbee, or at any rate the lady we all thought was Mrs. Hawksbee, who said to me—

"People say that *I* am Mrs. Hawksbee, and I don't like

¹ A red-legged partridge.

it at all. What on earth will Bill (her husband) think, if this rumour comes to his ears?"

Though exceedingly young in years, some kind diplomatist amongst the angels must have supplied me with the answer. Or perhaps it was Mrs. Hawksbee's entrancing personality, who knows? But the words blurted out were—

" You don't say so! How extraordinary! He must have taken all the best parts of the character from you, and the rest from the other people."

Mrs. Hawksbee was a firm friend to me for the rest of her days.

At this time Lord Dufferin was Viceroy, and Lord Roberts Commander-in-Chief—"a jolly good couple," as we probably said then. Speaking more maturely, they were the best Viceroy, and the best Commander-in-Chief, that I came across during forty years of rather distant experience of both high offices. Lord Dufferin was to my mind the ideal Viceroy. He was the representative of the King, who reigned high, and dealt only with the greater problems of ruling, leaving details to the scribes and Members of Council, each in his own province. At the same time Lord Dufferin possessed a charming personality, which was always at command to use as occasions of State, or Viceregal hospitality, might require. In Lady Dufferin he was blessed with the most gracious, talented, and popular lady who has ever sat by the Viceroy's side on the Viceregal throne.

Of Lord Roberts it is difficult to speak with becoming reserve. He is the biggest man I have ever known, whether as a soldier, or a statesman, or as the kindest of friends to all, whether small or great. Having been born too late I never met Bayard, but I feel sure that he would, with pride, share with Lord Roberts the glorious title, "*Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche.*"

Amongst the visitors at Simla that year, was a young fellow named Rudyard Kipling. His sister, a nice pretty girl of eighteen, used to give me a dance now and then, so I got to know him. His mother and sister were up for the season, and Rudyard used to run up for a few days at a time, when he could be spared. He was then sub-editor of what he called the local rag, the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore. It was at this time that he wrote *Plain Tales from the Hills*, and *Departmental Ditties*. They used to appear as feuillets,

on the outside page of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, and, curiously enough, did not set the Hill ablaze.

Some people thought them "Rather funny"; and some people wondered languidly "Who the doose is R. K.?" But the Tales and Ditties gave no offence at all, for the simple reason that, as before mentioned, no one recognised themselves, though immediately recognising how exactly the cap fitted someone else. Rudyard Kipling himself was so little in Simla that I have always felt convinced, in my heart of hearts, that his sister helped him a great deal, in the groundwork of his Tales and Ditties, she having a more intimate knowledge of Simla, and its society.

Miss Kipling was a bright clever girl, and though she did not say much, saw everything very distinctly. She was the bright damsel who, when Lord Dufferin asked her why she was not dancing, replied, with a placid smile, "You see I am quite young, I am only eighteen. Perhaps when I am forty I shall get some partners." This quiet little dig at the middle-aged ladies, who pranced about with the Hill captains, whilst their daughters sat out, is brought, it will be remembered, into one of Rudyard Kipling's little verses. It was some years later that a travelling publisher happened to find these same *Plain Tales* on an Indian railway book-stall, and grasping their genius arranged to republish them. From that moment Rudyard Kipling became the most famous and popular writer, both of prose and poetry, in the wide world.

Our place in the Military Budget helped it to balance nicely both ways, for we were "Unpaid Attachés," in the Intelligence Branch. Probably we did not do very much work, salving our consciences with the solatium that our mild labours were given free, to a rich Empire. But we enjoyed ourselves immensely, and were, we learnt afterwards, quite a feature of the season.

At the head of the Intelligence Branch was Colonel Mark Bell, V.C., an explorer of great daring and experience. One day when I was in his room about a piece of work, he said—

"Do you know any officer of the Guides who would take on a bit of reconnaissance work?"

"Certainly, sir," I said. "There are several," and mentioned Hammond, Fred Battye, Adams, Raleigh Egerton, and Fred Campbell. Stewart was at home on furlough.

Colonel Bell grunted, and said nothing more. Next day when passing my window, as he went along the verandah, he put his head in, and said—

“ I suppose you would not care to go yourself ? ”

“ By Jove, wouldn’t I, sir ! ” was my hardly respectful reply.

“ All right, I’ll send you,” Colonel Bell laconically remarked, and disappeared along the verandah.

And thus by sheer, and quite undeserved, good luck, I fell in for another campaign. But perhaps we had better get on to another chapter, to deal with this new adventure.

CHAPTER VI

AN ADVENTURE IN SIAM

WE were waging at this time one of those little wars which the British Empire engages in fairly regularly round its world-wide boundaries. The old Lion wants peace, and to live in peace and contentment with his neighbours. But along the great frontiers, over which the old Lion keeps watch and ward, here and there, year by year, wild men, wild tribes, even wild nations do their best to rouse him. He is great, and old, and of proved bravery and might, so he is loth to be disturbed by little insects, little prods, little darts, or even the howl of jackals.

He growls, and all is again peace and quiet, and the jackals run away. But sometimes his attention is engaged elsewhere, his back may be turned. Then in run the small pests, and perhaps tweak his tail, or do something equally foolish. The old Lion turns round, hardly troubling to get up, and puts one great paw, plump, on the offenders, and that is the end of them—as offenders.

What exactly were the high crimes and misdemeanours of Theebaw, King of Burmah, has now escaped my memory. My uncle, Robert Shaw, was British Resident at Mandalay, and there died at his post. There was no question of foul play in this case, but King Theebaw set to work murdering all sorts of people, including some of his own nearest relations. This was, more or less, a domestic matter, but eventually he fell seriously foul of the British Government, and had to be called to order.

Then ensued acts of open hostility, which could only be met on the same terms. Hence the Burmah War of 1886–87, which, as a result, added a rich and prosperous province, as large as Spain, to the British Empire. The British subaltern, and his brother sailor, who taken by and large, are really the bright, brave, and unassuming warriors who have had the

chief hand in building up the British Empire, do not bother their heads about this or that, they just go in and do the job required of them.

After the cryptic remark of Colonel Mark Bell, V.C., before mentioned, I heard nothing more about reconnaissances, and rejoined my regiment, at the end of my six months of "Unpaid" endeavour at Simla. Just before Christmas, however, a portentous telegram in cypher reached the Commandant of the Guides, which, being deciphered, directed that Lieutenant G. J. Younghusband was to hold himself in readiness to depart, at short notice, on military duty, the nature of which would be communicated in due course.

So careful was Colonel Bell not to jeopardise the lives of his officers, that he took the precaution to send these instructions, some 500 miles, by hand of a trusty messenger. For in India, and in the East generally, matters are apt to leak out through native clerks, postal or telegraph officials, which it is highly desirable should not be made public property. In the case of an officer, or man, starting on a hazardous adventure in Asia, it is often as much as his life is worth, if previous news of it gets abroad.

It being now thirty odd years after the event, it is permissible, without indiscretion, to give the gist of the instructions brought by the trusty messenger. Lord Roberts was Commander-in-Chief, but the actual operations in Burmah were being conducted, under his orders, by Sir George White; later of Ladysmith fame. Sir George White had reached Mandalay, and was now engaged in fighting eastward.

In Burmah all the mountain ranges, and consequently the river valleys, run generally north and south. So that, whilst working north to Mandalay, the natural features of the country were in our favour; directly the campaign turned eastward we were crossing obstacles, such as rivers and mountains, at right angles. Lord Roberts thought that there might be an easier way round, for be it mentioned that all existing maps of those parts were very imperfect. He therefore sent a subaltern, who happened to be myself, round to find it. It sounds rather funny nowadays, but by such-like inadequate means have the blessed old British found their way into the fairest portions of the earth.

Colonel Bell, in the course of conversation, remarked that

it would be just as well to "arrange my affairs" before starting. As a subaltern generally has not many affairs to arrange, except, perhaps, with his tailor, and for the care of a dog, or horse or two, I confidently left my affairs in the hands of Raleigh Egerton. The money available for military reconnaissance, such as this, was very restricted, for those were before the spacious days when the youngest child thought in millions. So I was given £200, and told to do my best with it.

As everyone knows, trekking in the wilds of Asia and Africa is often very expensive, but my old father gave me another £100, and that helped a lot. There was, on the financial side, another extraordinary obstacle, which could only protrude in India, or perhaps Ireland. To cover my tracks I was given "leave," ostensibly for shooting, but under the regulations only two months' leave was due to me. After that, if I did not return, the Pay Department would, after pained enquiries, which placed my Colonel in the dilemma between divulging a solemn secret, or perjuring himself perilously near the portals of a General Court Martial, post me as "absent without leave," and stop my pay. As I was away something like nine months, the Pay Department, represented by a fat and oily Bengali Babu, waxed fatter and fatter, whilst I grew leaner and leaner. It was only after expending oceans of ink, and acres of foolscap, that, by the personal intervention of people in high places, I eventually recovered a goodly portion, but not all, of my pay. The oily Babu saw to that!

The only escort I was to take with me was one man of the Guides, preferably a Gurkha, as he with his Mongolian type of features and small stature, would be less conspicuous in the countries we were to traverse, than a Sikh or a Pathan.

Judh Bir, Gurkha, was the man chosen by the Colonel, and a right tight brave little man and companion he proved.

Our orders were first to go to Calcutta, and there learn the use of the pocket sextant, study maps and books about the countries to be traversed, and receive our final instructions. After a week's hard work I got hold of the essentials, and we sailed for Moulmein, in Southern Burmah, whence our great adventure was to be made.

The Commissioner of Moulmein was Colonel Plant, one of the old sort, who kept open house and entertained royally and continuously; aided and abetted in the same by a most

charming and beautiful lady, his wife. Colonel Plant was an enormous man, weighing God knows how many stone. In addition to being Commissioner, he was Commander of the local defence battery of artillery. This martial side apparently necessitated his riding a horse, on certain occasions of drill and ceremony. A Burmah pony, the only indigenous equine, is about 12 hands 2 inches high, a stocky, high-hearted little beast; indeed, very like the beautiful little Welsh ponies exhibited by Mrs. H. D. Greene, at the Agricultural Hall, and elsewhere.

One of these which in England we associate with a small child, would without a qualm allow the gigantic Colonel to be hoisted on to his back. He would then not lie down and die, or even groan and be downhearted, but would at once, and without further orders, scamper off to the parade ground. The Colonel on these occasions, would be tightly encased in a Royal Artillery tunic, necessarily of vast proportions. Also by regulation, he wore a very small gold-laced forage cap of the pork-pie variety, on the side of his head. His sword, encased in a steel scabbard, and attached to his waistbelt by long white slings, clattered gaily along the road, occasionally striking a higher note against the pony's shoes, as the cavalcade scurried merrily along.

We were given letters of credit to Colonel Plant, which without divulging any deadly secrets, secured his co-operation, a quite invaluable asset. He obtained for us an interpreter and a cook, neither of whom should we have secured but for him. Both of these were absolutely essential, for not one word of the languages of these lands did either Judh Bir or I know; and as for cooking the only thing I could cook was a boiled egg, and Judh Bir's caste rather intervened between his cooking, or serving anything for me. Moreover, I am quite sure that no Englishman could do hard work and live on the class of food he would be capable of producing. To be strictly veracious, the interpreter, whom I called the Archbishop, because he was like one I had seen on the back of a tract, was a poisonous beast, and the most unholy coward to be met with on a long day's march. The cook was a Madrassi, yclept David, after the King, a coward by birth; but he cooked all right, which after all was his job. His previous greatest trek had probably been only a few hundred yards from his master's bungalow to the bazaar, and back again. Though a craven

creature he had perforce to stick to us, for he, like us, knew no local language, and would have been scuppered, certain sure, if he had gone off on his own.

For armament Judh Bir and I each carried a Martini-Henry carbine, with fifty rounds of ammunition. We had also a twelve-bore shot-gun, with a hundred cartridges, and two revolvers with twenty-four rounds. The cook was invited to carry a revolver, so as to defend himself from lurking enemies ; and the interpreter was armed with the shot-gun. But both returned these weighty armaments into store, after a march or two, preferring the risks of invasion to having to carry the horrible things.

With becoming modesty, and also because our purse was slender, we made up only one pony load, of about 120 lb. of reserve stores of food. If I was going that trip again I should go with a mule train of supplies, a goodly proportion of which would be loads of common salt. For though we did not know it beforehand, we were going into a practically saltless land. Salt everywhere, in those parts, was then of the greatest value, so that a teaspoonful of it bought, not only great civility, but chickens, and eggs, and tobacco as well.

Unfortunately we only took one bottle of it, and so generous were we with this common commodity, that this bottle became a marine in a week or two. Those only who have had to go without salt for weeks and months, can appreciate its loss. Without salt all unsweetened food becomes, day by day, more unpalatable, till everything seems to taste of nothing more appetising than boiled dishcloths ; thus, however hungry one may be, all food seems loathsome.

Colonel Plant bought for me, for Rs. 250 (about £17), a really first-class Burmah pony, an iron grey about 12 hands 2 inches high, but built like a miniature heavy-weight English hunter. Always merry and bright, and keeping fat and fit on bamboo leaves and rice, as a rule the only obtainable fodder. His first joke with me was to set off at a hard gallop, and no bit or hands on earth could stop him, straight at an elephant palisade, about 12 feet high, and naturally made strong enough to intern elephants. I thought—

“ Good God ! He is going to try and jump it ! ” and sat back, awaiting the inevitable doom.

At just nice jumping distance, however, he propped like a

stone image, and sent me on with great violence into the palisade, happily not head first. As a matter of fact, I am not prepared to swear that I did not arrive the other end first. No bones broken ; and henceforth we were great friends. Joe he was named, after a facetious donkey, once seen in a circus, and he was treated more like a dog than a horse. He was never tied up, and just roamed about the camp, grazed, or lay down and slept where and when he pleased, as long as it was not on top of me.

We made our first attempt to carry out the instructions given by Colonel Bell, by working up the Salween River, which runs northwards, more or less parallel, to the Irrawaddy River, and thus turns the ranges of hills across which the British forces were advancing. But after struggling up, for 100 miles or so, we had to bow to *force majeure*. Two soldiers and a cook could not force their way through the roving guerilla bands which infested the country. How we escaped with our lives is still a mystery ; probably the proverbial good luck of the British subaltern served us.

Though surrounded, and shadowed in the most uncanny manner, we were never actually attacked, perhaps because Judh Bir and I never slept at the same time, night or day. By turns we sat up, and kept guard, with a loaded carbine at full cock across our knees. Finding further progress impossible, and recognising that it would do no one any good if we left our bones there, we made a crafty cast eastward, and then, by a detour, found the river again, and hastened down it to our advanced base.

Thence we made a new start, and working almost due east, crossed over into Siam. There we found the people most friendly, almost too friendly, for in the wilder parts a white man was a new species to them, they never having seen an Englishman before. Mobs of them surrounded us at every village, and silently watched this curious creature and his weird ways. During meals they sat and watched with absorbing interest ; but the greatest and most exciting event of all was my toilet. We bivouacked in the open, having no tents, and therefore all such entertainments were *al fresco* and free. The majority of the spectators were ladies, and this might be thought a little embarrassing to all parties, but happily it did not seem so in the least to our feminine admirers.

To avoid this crowd, we tried to make our nightly halts at some isolated hut, on the outskirts of a village, so that next morning we could be through and away, before the kindly inhabitants had heard of our arrival. At one of these it very nearly fell to my lot to enact the part of Joseph, to the huge delight of Judh Bir.

The lady of this particular isolated farmhouse, a comely damsel of eighteen or so, was most kind and hospitable, helped us to find firewood, drew water for us, and brought rice for the pony. To add further to our obligations she insisted on helping me to shave. A wonderful sight! To assist Judh Bir to undress me, still more wonderful! To see a white man in a bath most wonderful of all!

This was all very nice and friendly, and nothing really to grouse about, but being now old acquaintances, the lady suggested by signs and tokens, that I should take the place of her legitimate spouse. Thinking I was very dense and did not understand, she called in Judh Bir to assist in making the proposal clear, to that warrior's great amusement. However, through Judh Bir, who somehow made himself more intelligible to the damsel than I, it was explained that, amongst other detriments, I had at home at least five very fierce wives, who would do me in, certain sure, if I went wandering off on such-like by-paths. The little lady, though mildly vexed, was fain to agree that this was a very good reason. She therefore complacently asked for a cake of Pears' soap to make up for this harrowing loss. With this great prize, she went off quite happy, and shortly returned bearing, as a return present, a nice plump capon. Irony may even be found in a village girl in the far East.

We had now journeyed across to the next great waterway, which leads north. This is the Me Ping River, which flows parallel to the Irrawaddy and to the Salween, and is about 100 miles east of the latter. Up this river we worked, without incident, till we were within 20 miles of Zimmé, when a catastrophe of the first degree befell us. We had two elephants, partly because one elephant man would not go alone, and partly because we had just over one elephant load of baggage, calculated at local rates and weights, which were rather humble for an elephant.

On this night of tragedy these two elephant men, with their

beasts, disappeared in the darkness, and were no more seen. This was passing strange, for I owed them a certain amount of money for the hire of their beasts, which it had been agreed was to be paid at Zimmé. Either they had got cold feet and were afraid, owing to some previous misdemeanour, to go into Zimmé, or they may have heard that their elephants might be commandeered or stolen there. There may have been a dozen other reasons, for the Oriental mind is rather complicated and childishly diffuse. Anyway they went off without their money, and we were left stranded in a small village in the wilds.

Happily the day we arrived I had performed a miracle, esteemed to be of the highest order. There was an elderly lady, the superior wife of the village chieftain, who was, they said, sick unto death. Would I come and cure her? For by tradition, in all primitive parts of the world, every white man, preferably an Englishman, is a doctor and a very high-class doctor at that. He, by tradition, not only mends broken legs, and arms, and heads, but by means of magic pills and draughts saves the moribund from the grave or the funeral bonfire.

Personally, I know nothing whatever about surgery, and my medical equipment consisted of a bottle of quinine, a bottle of chlorodyne, a bottle of Cockle's pills, and a tin of vaseline. The wrappers on these told me how to use such simple remedies. In this case, as it was a matter of courtesy, I acceded to the popular clamour and went to see the lady. She moaned and groaned and looked pretty bad, as a yellow lady with fever generally does. Through the interpreter I gathered that she was suffering from the machinations of some devil, which with my wonderful medical skill I diagnosed as fever. So I decided to sacrifice two of our precious Cockle's pills, and two of our still more precious quinine tabloids, on the altar of Æsculapius. But the lady, between deep groans, refused these priceless offerings, and said that white doctors cured people by writing magical words on pieces of paper. This was really rather curious, for she must somehow have heard from travellers that white doctors at Moulmein, or Rangoon, wrote something, magic no doubt, on a piece of paper, and afterwards the patient got well. The good lady had missed the connecting link between the piece of paper and the chemist's shop.

Therefore to humour the lady I tore a leaf out of my notebook, and wrote her name and address and a few words, "Good luck, may you soon be well," or something of that sort. This was carefully folded up, put into a minute bag, and hung by a string round her neck. The Cockle's pills I popped casually into her mouth in the course of this conversation, and she munched them up gratefully—nectar from heaven !

Also, by employing a little legerdemain, Judh Bir next morning caused the two quinine pills to follow the same road. At about twelve noon that same day what was our surprise to receive a visit from the lady, who said she was now quite well, owing to the charm round her neck ! Could M. Coué have done better ? Having now, at one bound, become a great physician, a very large though hardly lucrative practice was at once opened up.

One lady indeed had such abiding faith that she brought her small boy, who had been born without hands, and requested that the white doctor would produce, or induce to grow, a new pair. Fortunately we had no drugs or poisons which a careless if well-meaning prodigality might, prescribed by an amateur, have caused an alarming rise in the death-rate in the district. Happily a pencil and a piece of paper could do no great harm, and apparently did wonders.

Having thus become popular with these kind and simple folk, and despairing of getting elephants, we asked the villagers to help us. In reply to this appeal the whole adult village turned out three days later, and volunteered to carry our kit on their shoulders to the next village. The more cynical will conclude that these poor heathens were only too glad to get rid of us, and our medical skill, at any price. Be that as it may, we got again started on our journey. Our first villagers gave us such a reputation, good or bad, that the next village helped us on another stage, and so finally to Zimmé.

It would be ungrateful not to record that this service was performed absolutely voluntarily, and free of charge. When my first villagers deposited our kits, I had calculated out how much was due to them at current rates, and had the money ready to distribute. But they just put down their loads, made their salaams, and departed. Judh Bir was sent racing after them with a present of money sufficient to buy enough tobacco for themselves, and their families, for quite a long time. The

later stagers were more mercenary, and demanded in advance their due hire.

Arrived thus at Zimmé as poor travellers, for one's importance in those parts is gauged by the number of elephants, or mules, or ponies in one's train. Elephants signify aristocracy, mules the upper middle-classes, and ponies well-to-do traders, but we having none of these, were taken to a poor man's serai, or hostelry. Here we learnt to our surprise that there was a white man in Zimmé, an Americano.

At once mounting old Joe, I set off to seek the Americano, and found him in the person of Dr. Cheek, of the American Mission, and a right good friend he proved. Dr. Cheek was in miniature, what the British, during their Homeric expansion, have been on a large scale. He was a doctor, he was a missionary, and he was a trader. He healed, he preached, and he had an excellent shop, at which could be bought a wonderful variety of goods. And no doubt he had a revolver somewhere quite handy.

Very hospitably he asked me to dinner, and at this repast we got back to old English baronial times. There was a long narrow table, at one end of which sat Dr. and Mrs. Cheek and myself, whilst the retainers, according to importance, filled the seats down each side of the table. The only feudal article wanting was the "salt," marking as of old the dividing line between the baronial party and their retainers.

Dr. Cheek knew those parts well, and strongly advised us to go no further, thinking perhaps that it was just a young subaltern with his orderly, out for a lark. But when he saw we meant to go on, he was of the greatest possible assistance. He therefore arranged with a caravan, with partially unloaded ponies which was returning to Yunnan, to carry our kits through to Kiang Tung on their spare animals. During these negotiations he somehow gave, quite unwittingly, to the head man of the caravan the impression that I was an American missionary, which slight mistake proved to be very fortunate for us.

But there were subtle influences at work in Zimmé, on thoroughly Oriental lines, to prevent our going on. The Siamese are notoriously honest, anyway in respect to theft. For instance, one evening at Zimmé, sitting by the roadside, I dropped my silver cigarette case, and did not discover my loss

till quite late the next day. As a forlorn hope I went out on to the road where I had sat the night before, and there sure enough, glittering in the sun, was my cigarette case. Hundreds of people must have passed that shining object, but none had touched it. For the very sufficient reason, that the penalty for theft was death.

That being so, you may imagine our horror and bewilderment at finding, on the morning of departure, that the whole of the saddlery had been removed. No thief had done that: it was without doubt the local government's trump card.

However that sort of thing does not defeat any decent subaltern, so Judh Bir made a bridle and bit, and reins, of rope; and tied a folded blanket on to the pony in place of a saddle. Thus we set off, without great delay, to catch up the caravan, calling first however to say good-bye to Dr. Cheek. We told him of our loss and made light of it, and so did he.

"That's easily remedied," he said.

And out of his Stores forthwith he produced a complete new set of saddlery of the Mexican pattern. Naturally I was very grateful, and asked what I owed him for it. But he would not take a penny, to my great embarrassment. A very kindly deed, and nicely done. My only hope is that the very best set of English saddlery, sent to him later when we returned to civilisation, in some small degree repaid the obligation.

Talking of payments, brings to mind a somewhat curious dilemma in which we were often placed. The bulk of our money was in the form of gold leaf, this being the most portable and only exchangeable currency. This was carried inside a folding tobacco pouch, and consisted of £250 in gold leaf. When we wanted change in rupees, one of these gold leaves had to be taken off the little bundle, most carefully weighed in a goldsmith's balance, and the exchange value claimed. These gold leaves are very thin indeed, thinner than the finest tissue paper, and one requires to be in a very still corner, firstly to get the leaf off, and secondly so as not to run the risk of having it blown away whilst being weighed. So fragile are these gold leaves that though carried in a thick wad, in an indiarubber pouch, in my breast pocket, just the wear and tear of one's ordinary goings and comings wore off in unrecoverable dust

5 per cent. of the value of each leaf. A gold coin, worn however thin, is worth its face value, but gold, in the form of leaf, is worth only what it weighs on the scales.

With many benedictions on Dr. Cheek, we caught up the caravan, and set forth on the next stage of our long trek. This was quite a new experience, and rather interesting. The caravan, which consisted entirely of ponies, made a double march every day—one in the morning, and one in the afternoon; much as Boers on the trek. The ponies are let out free in the forest at the midday halt, and all night, to pick up what grazing they can. They are recalled when required by certain shrill and far-reaching calls, well known to them. These convey the announcement that their feed of grain, unhusked rice in this case, awaits them.

This feed of grain is spread broadcast on pieces of matting, and each pony picks up what he can, just like chickens in the farmyard. Late arrivals naturally fare worse than their earlier brethren, consequently all hurry for fear of being late for the feast.

The pack saddles then used, and probably still, are very curious. They have no girths at all, but are just prevented from slipping backwards or forwards, by a breastband and a crupper. The load on either side must therefore balance, even to an ounce, for if there was much difference it would topple over; and anyway, however slight the list, it would give the pony a sore back. The merchants had fixed loads of merchandise, each pair of bales being exactly the same weight. These were made up at Moulmein, and were never touched again till they reached their destination. But our kit, consisting of our bedding, stores and small odds and ends, caused great heart-searchings and weighings, at the crack of every dawn. If by neglect, or in a hurry, Judh Bir put my spare boots in a different bundle to that of the day before; or if I took a tin of meat out of the provision box, and so made one side lighter than the other, there was the devil to pay, so to speak, when loading-up time came.

Passing through Kiang Hai, we entered the Shan States, and came also to the most perilous part of our enterprise. Sir George White with his army, was now attacking from the West (though we did not know it at the time), whilst Judh Bir and I were attacking from the South! In due course

we reached Kiang Tung, the capital, and eventually, by the Grace of God, left it alive.

Two purely mundane accidents, so to speak, assisted in this, at any rate to us, gratifying result. In the first place, the chief of the caravan, a Chinese Mahomedan, had somehow got it firmly embedded in his head, Dr. Cheek having negotiated our arrangement, that I also was an American missionary, and had therefore nothing to do with the British. This exclusive knowledge he imparted to everyone. The second fortunate circumstance was that the Kiang Tung Prince had died just before we arrived, and had been succeeded by his son, aged eleven. The aforesaid deceased Kiang Tung Prince happened to be one of those rather seclusive and hasty individuals who, on principle, kill any white man entering their territory. Only one had tried here, and he had been promptly murdered. Let me clearly explain that we did not know these things at the time, so there is no question of posing as frightful heroes. Not at all, we merely went because we were told to ; and happily lacking any kind, sort, or brand of imagination, which in like cases often leads to conjuring up fearsome bogeys, we just went.

In Kiang Tung the thin veneer of the American missionary wore off, and we found ourselves virtually prisoners. The interpreter had long since deserted us, not greatly to our grief, for we had somehow picked up enough patois to get along, and which sufficed for buying chickens and eggs, though not enough to talk ourselves out of an ugly hole. One day, however, a funny sort of fellow came to see us in the serai, where we were prisoners at large. He was a big burly fellow, dressed as a Burman (the Burmans being neither big nor burly), and spoke Hindustani fluently. He was as a matter of fact a spy, sent by the Council of State who ruled for the Prince, to find out all about us. Being even then not too young to know that the most successful spies are those who take guerdons from both sides, I talked to him about nothing more important than my great anxiety to shoot wild ducks, of which there were great numbers on the adjoining lakes and swamps. But, as a mark of friendship and esteem, I bestowed on him a scarlet mess waistcoat (second-hand, and part of my barter outfit) ; which magnificent gift made him simply glow with honest pride, and incidentally bought him.

Next night he came to me again, and then we got down to

business. The man's name was Moungkin, a half-caste; his father having been a man named Macgregor, by Moungkin stated to have been the captain of one of the boats of the Irrawaddy flotilla, but equally likely to have been the engineer, or boatswain, of the same. Anyway this father of his was a white man for certain, which the half-breed's stout build clearly proclaimed. In features, however, Moungkin followed his Burmese mother closely, having a marked Mongolian caste of features. Moungkin was remarkably proud of Pa Macgregor, and of the white blood which he had inherited from him. On that alone he was almost ready to help us, but there was more behind.

After much beating about the bush, he confessed that he had committed a crime (we heard afterwards that it was something closely allied to murder), at Moulmein, or Rangoon, I forget which, but had escaped and was now a fugitive from justice and an outlaw. This regrettable incident had happened many years before, and his one wish in life now was, and always had been, to get back to Burmah and Papa Macgregor.

"Well," I said, "if you will get us out of this hole, I will do my best for you."

It speaks well for the English name that 1,000 miles from anywhere the word of a stray Englishman was taken as his bond. Moungkin might never have seen this Englishman again, nor did he, but felt sure that he would keep his word. Incidentally he did, for the ban of outlawry seems to have been removed, on the grounds that Moungkin had saved the lives of a British officer and his orderly, under circumstances of considerable risk to his own neck. A year or so later came a grateful letter from Moungkin, with the Rangoon postmark on it.

As a result of this palaver the clouds lifted a little, and next day I was allowed, under supervision, to go and shoot ducks. Then the sun came out, and I was invited by the Prince to a State durbar, as an honoured guest. Goodness knows what lies, or fairy stories, Moungkin had been telling about us, nor did we know enough of Shan language to find out, but the result was eminently satisfactory. However, we took no risks, and Judh Bir was left on guard over our kit, and most important of all, over the two carbines and the shot-gun. One revolver I took concealed about my person, and the other, a

small and inoffensive weapon, was carried ostentatiously as a present to the Prince. A second present was a very handsome Kashmir embroidered robe, brought from the Calcutta *Toshi Khana*, for a such-like occasion.

The Government Treasure House, or *Toshi Khana* at Calcutta, is quite a unique place. No English official, or officer of the Army, from the Viceroy, or Commander-in-Chief, downwards, is allowed to take any present from an Indian. But sometimes these come in the form of recognised tribute, or the Army in the field may capture rich booty. All such articles are sent to the *Toshi Khana*, and there disposed of by public auction, and the proceeds credited to the Government Treasury. Officers sent on missions, where presents have to be given, are supplied from the *Toshi Khana* with suitable articles.

After we were all assembled, the boy Prince came in from behind a curtain, and sat in front of a sort of State chair or throne, whilst all the courtiers grovelled on the ground, and I made my best bow. Moungkin acted as interpreter, and preferred our request that we might be allowed to proceed on our way.

It may here be mentioned, that the secondary portion of our mission was more geographical than military. From Kiang Tung, we were by trusty messenger to send across the sketch maps and reports already made to Sir George White. Then we were to journey northward, through Yunnan, and hit off at right angles, the line of my brother Frank's great journey, from China to Kashmir, which was through the length of Asia. Afterwards, comparing dates and distances, though neither of us had the remotest notion where the other was, whether in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, it was just possible that we might actually have met in person, as well as would our routes on the map.

But the Prince of Kiang Tung, or rather his councillors, would have none of it, and we were quite powerless to move, for our own ponies were impounded and no one dare hire out others to us. After much negotiation, it was finally agreed that we should be allowed to return the way we came. Indeed we were glad enough to get away at any price, for the more sharp-eared said they could hear Sir George White's guns, only 25 miles away ; whilst streams of armed Shans, fleeing before him, began to flow into Kiang Tung. Before daylight one morning our ponies were returned to us, and we were

urgently invited to depart. This we did joyfully, and before nightfall were some 25 miles clear of the place.

Rather an uncomfortable experience befell me that day. We knew we were followed, but with what object we were not quite sure, whether it was to do us in before we left the principality, or to steal our arms, or merely to see that we really did leave the country.

Amongst other things my business was to make an accurate "road report," as it is called amongst soldiers, that is a report, with an accurate sketch map, showing the route we followed. To do this in thick forest is rather difficult, for no landmarks are visible, and as the path turns and twists every 10 yards, no forward bearing can be taken. My plan was to stop behind every five minutes, and when the baggage ponies had got well ahead, take a forward bearing on the sound of the bell which the leading pony carried. At this time I was pretty seedy, both my legs were covered with sores, and so swollen that I could barely put foot to the ground; added to this disability both my eyelids were so inflamed that I could barely see through the slits left.

To rest each eye in turn, Judh Bir tied a shockingly dirty wet rag over it, and left the other free for duty. On this morning my right eye was bandaged, and like a congealed idiot, whilst taking my forward bearing, I rested my Martini-Henry carbine, at full cock, against a tree trunk to my *right* rear, and thus out of sight.

Hearing the sound of a distant bell behind me, and concluding that another caravan was coming along in rear, I hastily put away my prismatic compass and notebook, and turned round to pick up my carbine. It was gone! I blew a preconcerted whistle for Judh Bir, and turned back along the track to find the thief. I found him quite quickly, for before going 100 yards I was looking down the muzzle of my own carbine, with an infernal scoundrel at the trigger end.

To this day I do not know exactly what happened. There was a very loud bang, and the next thing I remember was Judh Bir pouring his water bottle over my face. Probably being weak on the legs, and rather ill, as well as more than half blind, I tripped and fell, hitting my head against a tree; for the sportsman with my carbine had most certainly missed me. Nor did we ever see him or the carbine again; though I heard a

good deal concerning the latter from the Ordnance Department on my return.

Back in Siam we were at peace again, and could rest and be thankful. We had one little adventure which may be of interest. Going easily along and halting on each seventh day, though we had lost count as to whether it was really a Sunday or not, we came on one sixth evening to a little village situated on the banks of a half-dried stream. Next morning, presumably Sunday, a little boy came to us and after unrolling numerous exceedingly filthy rags, produced a beautiful blue stone, manifestly a sapphire.

We asked him, in the patois we had learnt, where he had found it. He pointed up-stream, and by signs made us to understand that it was dug up out of the dry bed of the stream, here all gravel. I asked what he wanted for the stone, and displayed my loose silver, mingled wherewith being some bright new two-anna pieces, of the size, appearance and value of a silver threepenny bit. He chose as his guerdon, one of these brilliant little coins, in preference to all larger but less shiny objects, and seemed greatly elated. Also being pleased at getting a sapphire for 3d., we asked if there were many more of these blue stones for sale at the same price. The boy nodded his head and departed.

That evening he returned, accompanied by quite a small crowd of friends, each of whom had a beautiful blue stone, wrapped in many unclean rags. Each of these, and there were eighteen of them, seemed mightily pleased to receive a new two-anna piece in exchange for his blue stone. The mystery of our having so many new two-anna pieces is thus explained. When we left Moulmein, Colonel Plant told us that money was very scarce inland, and that if we bought a chicken, worth two annas, and had no coin smaller than a rupee (which is sixteen annas), nobody could give us change, and therefore each chicken would cost us eight times its value. He therefore advised us to go to the Bank, and there get rolls of two-anna pieces. These, for convenience of carriage, we just poked about, in convenient crevices, amongst our stores, kit and bedding.

Thus we were in a position to joyfully part with nineteen bright new silver two-anna pieces, for a like number of sapphires. Be assured we took the longitude and latitude of that place with great care, intending to return later with a waggon.

The first knowledgeable fellow we met, on our return to comparative civilisation, was a French banker who had a knowledge of stones, and who lived at Bangkok. He examined the sapphires and gave the opinion that all round they were worth about £5 apiece, no great value really, but a good return for the 3*d.* given for them. We thought this rather a low estimate, having visions of hundreds of pounds apiece, though we knew absolutely nothing about stones ; but they looked so nice.

The final disillusionment however came later, when on taking them to Hamilton & Co., the leading jewellers in Calcutta, they were pronounced to be fakes. Extraordinarily good fakes, Hamilton & Co. added, possibly to soothe our shattered nerves, but emanating without doubt from the port of Hamburg, or possibly from even nearer home, Birmingham ! Another of my countrymen, no less a local expert than Mr. Gould, the British Consul, had taken an equally bad knock over similar sapphires.

Some years afterwards, I was staying at a country house in England, and as these sapphires had taken up a permanent abode in a little tin box, which I carried about with me, the assembled multitudes, hearing their story, after dinner demanded to see them. Shown they were, and those who were courteous and polite said—

“ No wonder you were taken in by them ! ”

Whilst those who were more blunt, said—

“ Any dam ass could see they were fakes ! ”

And so the stones went to bed, and next morning we went onwards on another visit. But a few days later, when I had told the same old story, and a sight of the sapphires was demanded, I found that they had remained behind. It would have been rather amusing to see the face of the footman, or whoever it was who took them, when he tried to trade them off on a pawnbroker ! Personally, I never saw them again, and goodness knows where they are now. Perchance in a priceless bracelet !

To return to our journey. At length we came to the time when the rainy season descended on us, and it seemed better to abandon the road and take to one of the great waterways, and so down to the coast. It was a great grief parting with our ponies, of whom we had got very fond, and which had become as friendly and domesticated as dogs. Much more

friendly, indeed, than Chang, the hairless dog, who had now followed us 1,000 miles or more.

Especially grievous was it parting with old Joe, my herculean charger. Though his height was only 12 hands 2 inches, Joe had the strength of a cart-horse, and the heart of an Arab. He had never been sick or sorry for an hour, though sometimes limping badly from loss of shoes. Arrived in camp, however, he was his own bright self again, and strolled about our bivouac, like a mischievous boy, enjoying himself thoroughly. Once or twice, when he had committed a great crime, such as pushing the cook over, whilst he bent over the cooking pots, or had eaten the top out of my pith hat, his ears were boxed, whereupon he would pretend to be very fierce and insulted. He would dash at the boxer with his ears laid back and teeth exposed, as if to eat him alive. Arrived fairly close, he would stop dead, waltz round on his fore-feet, and plant a couple of enormous kicks in the air. Then with ears pricked and ninnying softly, he would trot up and begin nosing for a bit of sugarcane.

"Sorry master. Only just working off a little exuberance."

There was no sale for ponies in those parts ; and it is a doubtful compliment, and hard on the ponies, to give them to people who do not understand them. We decided therefore to send them across country, as a present to Dr. Cheek. It was not a very far trek, only 60 miles or so, and we sent the most trusty Shan with them. But from that day to this we have never heard whether they reached Dr. Cheek or not, though at intervals, for a year or more, enquiries were made.

Chang parted with us, as he had joined us, quite casually. It had been our intention to bring him home as a canine curiosity. He was elephant-grey in colour, and rather like a bull terrier in size and appearance, but had a perfectly hairless skin. This may have been an hereditary attribute, because there are hairless dogs, but also there was no secret about the cause of Chang's hairless condition. His custom was, when we were on the march, especially on a cold morning, to remain behind, curled up in the wood ashes of last night's fire. These ashes were often very hot, indeed much too hot to put one's hand into ; but Chang used to roll in them, and then fall comfortably asleep in this sultry bed. No blandishments would call him off, and when we first knew him we thought each day that we

had left him for ever. Not at all. Hours later, when his bed had become cold he would arise and leave it, and tracking us along by our hoof marks turn up at the midday halt. Naturally no dog's coat, however strong, would stand perpetual singeing. So, as I say, he was hairless, and looked rather like the scalded pigs which we see hanging by their heels in front of a pork butcher's shop, only he was elephant-grey.

When we took to boats, Chang was with difficulty herded on board, but once there went to sleep permanently on the baking hot deck. He had no bother now about trekking and catching up travelling idiots. Daily however he loafed ashore, just for a few minutes, when we happened to be tied up. We had become so accustomed to leaving him to look after himself, that nobody noticed that he was not on board one day.

Where, or when, he had gone ashore no one remembered ; and as we were being wafted down a big river in flood, to go back and search for him was out of the question. We were sorry to lose him, though he had made friends with none of us—I don't think I ever saw him even wag his tail—but he had been very useful as a watchdog. Not a soul, or wild animal, could come near us by night or by day, without a very pronounced warning from Chang.

After weeks of this drifting, devoured meanwhile by the largest and most voracious brand of mosquito it has been my misfortune to meet, we arrived at Bangkok and the sea. Bangkok is a sort of Eastern Venice, a goodly portion of it being built on piles, with water ebbing and flowing beneath and alongside. The boatmen, without a with-your-leave or by-your-leave, rowed straight to the landing stage of the British Minister, Mr. Gould, and cast us and our impedimenta ashore on his doorstep. As, up to that moment, Mr. Gould had not a notion that we existed, and certainly had never asked us to stay with him, we rather resented the impetuosity of our crew. Personally, looking like a disreputable beach-comber, I was not at all the sort of person that anyone would welcome unhandcuffed to their house ; still less so a high official as the British Minister. Happily, however, I had a visiting card—funny thing to have on a wild journey—on which was printed my name, regiment and club. This was sent in, as is the custom east of Suez when calling.

Mr. Gould at once took me at my visiting card value, and was

kindness itself. He insisted on putting us up for as long as we cared to stay, and simply covered us with gladness and good cheer. It was indeed good to meet an Englishman again after all these months in the wilds, and to again speak the English tongue, and hear the English news.

We sat down four to dinner, I in the most decayed and torn garments, but fresh from a real good bath, and nicely shaved with my host's razor, my own being too blunt to cut anything harder than butter.

Though happy I was curiously tongue-tied. Perhaps it was from having been so long alone, for Judh Bir spoke little, and that in Hindustani. Perhaps also, from being so long alone, I could not readily catch and take up the conversation. The shuttlecock of words, backwards and forwards, seemed to go too fast for me to catch. No doubt this sensation has been felt by many others, who have been long away from converse with their fellow-countrymen. In a day or two, however, one recovered one's speech and capacity for joining readily in the conversation.

My clothing being too depraved for words, Mr. Gould told off one of his retainers, an old British bluejacket, to take me to a shop where I could buy some few garments to carry on with. We arrived in due course at an emporium, owned by a Chinaman, where there was displayed a wonderful assortment of European clothing, all apparently part worn. However, one cannot be very fastidious on such occasions, so I chose a couple of white drill suits, and paid a few dollars for them. On the way back to the Consulate, I asked my friend the blue-jacket whence the Chinaman collected this curious mixture of European clothes, ranging as they did, from a black frock-coat and English tweeds to cotton and silk suits.

"They're dead men's clothes," replied the bluejacket laconically.

Furthermore, he explained that when sailors, or passengers, were drowned, or died at sea, their belongings were generally sold by auction at the first port reached. This naturally raised the question in my mind, as to whether the late owners of my trousseau had died of some virulent disease, such as cholera, small-pox, or plague; or more satisfactorily, from a sanitary point of view, had been drowned at sea. Happily I caught no deadly disease from them; but they were so mani-

festly dead sailors' clothes in cut, make and material, that the Manager of Raffles Hotel at Singapore later, would not accept me as a guest without earnest money in the shape of a 50-rupee deposit in advance.

My Bangkok chaperone, the sailor, asked if I would like to go and see the "Creamatorium"—sounds rather like a bit of Ireland. I said I would, thinking it was something to do with a dairy farm, doubtless a curious or even unique feature in a city standing in the water. On the way to the "creamatorium," a curious but by no means unique adventure befell me. My hat was stolen off my head ! Not a dead man's hat, but my own superb, though somewhat weather-worn, headpiece.

The sailor, in his rickshaw, was in front, showing the way ; and I, reclining gracefully in mine, was following. Suddenly my hat was whipped off my head, naturally by the wind, I thought, though to be sure there was no wind. Looking back, I saw no hat on the road, but just caught a glimpse of a Chinaman slipping hastily up a side alley. Prodding my rickshaw coolie in the back, as a sign that he should heave-to, I hopped out, and dashed up the side alley. There were a certain number of blank-looking people, who gazed with astonishment at seeing an Englishman dashing about without a hat. But I could not see the Chinaman, nor my hat, and had perforce to return to the Dead Man's store to get another—rather nautical this time. Mr. Gould told me afterwards that this is a common, and lucrative form of theft. A hat, and especially an English hat, is of marketable value, however old ; so the would-be thief just trots after your rickshaw, and seizing a convenient moment, just whips off your hat from behind and disappears up a side alley. After a day or two, one might have the good fortune to buy one's own hat back for a few rupees at the Dead Man's shop.

After this interlude, and I adorned with the headpiece of a deceased sea skipper, we arrived at the "creamatorium." The smell, however, was not in the least like that of cream. Conducted by the Able Seaman, I was taken into the most horrible place it is possible to imagine, or describe.

In Siam, or anyway at Bangkok, when the citizens, after finishing their earthly career, pass the portals, it is decreed that their bodies shall be burnt. A very sanitary regulation indeed, especially considering how the city is situated. But

wood, for the funeral pyre, is comparatively dear. It would, in fact, cost several shillings adequately to burn one's nearest, and dearest. This might be very well for the rich, or comparatively rich people, but quite beyond the means of poor people ; especially if they had been rather unfortunate in having a quick succession of casualties.

The law enforced that the relatives should place the late lamented in a wooden coffin ; and as this coffin would eventually be consigned to the flames, they naturally made it of the thinnest and cheapest wood. Next it was ordained that they should, within twenty-four hours (for the climate is sultry), take the body to the burning place. Arrived there, they had to provide the wood for the cremation, but in many cases had not the cash wherewith to buy it. So the departed relative was left in pawn, till by the sweat of their brows, or by borrowing from their friends, they could get together enough money to buy the requisite amount of wood for the funeral pyre.

This noble effort took in some cases only days ; in others weeks and months ; whilst in extreme cases the bodies had been left for years. These coffins in pledge were placed in tiers and rows—hundreds of them. All the bodies were manifestly in advanced stages of decomposition, and many had burst through their frail coffins, so that dry bones, as well as putrid legs and arms and heads, lay about. Even the vultures, which were welcome as scavengers, could not cope with this awful plethora, and sat about completely gorged. It was a horrible experience, and I heartily cursed my sailor friend for taking me to his beastly "crematorium."

Rowing a little way up the river one day, the boatmen pointed out an island, on which was to be seen an imposing building. Asked what it was, the boatmen said that it was one of the palaces of the King of Siam. The King of Siam, of those days, had 800 wives, possibly in emulation of that much-married monarch, Solomon, King of Israel.

In search of general knowledge, we asked the boatmen how the King managed to accommodate 800 wives in this building. This was evidently a tactless question, and drew forth sighs. They said it was a poor place, the King only came there for a few days at a time, when it was very hot. It was certainly wanting in accommodation, and they wagged their heads des-

pondently, for he could bring with him only 200 of his wives. One cannot sufficiently admire the then King of Siam. I cannot imagine, for instance, anyone of us, when visiting Brighton for the week-end, having the kindness to take with us 200 good ladies, wives or otherwise.

Nor was any unseemly levity allowed unto these 800 Queens, as we learnt whilst at Bangkok. In this case it appeared that one of the pages of the Palace had been found playing catch-me-who-catch-can, or something of that sort, with one of the outlying Queens. Caught *flagrante delicto*, so to speak, in this manifest indulgence in *lèse-majesté*, the page, in the course of a few hours, found himself parting with his head. The lady, for her part, having been securely sewn into a sack, was thrown into the river, for the crocodiles to sport with. This was the story told us, but possibly it was only a parable to discourage like efforts on the part of Judh Bir.

It was really rather a rotten system. The King could not know several hundreds of his wives, even by sight ; though probably a goodly proportion of them had, on first arrival, passed an hour or two in the vicinity of the connubial couch—or the local equivalent, a mat on the floor. Yet these 800 women, of all ages, were for ever condemned to the corporeal existence of a nun. Without being able to speak with authority, it was fairly clearly hinted to us that there were a good many lucky pages, and only a few, like our friend, unlucky. We were very glad to hear it. Selfishness, and the hoarding up of superfluous wives, are horrible defects in human character.

After staying for about a week in Mr. Gould's hospitable house, and feeling much the better for it, we took ship to Singapore. This ship, it so happened, had last carried a cargo of sugar ; and though the sugar had departed, the cockroaches remained. Never have there been so many, nor of so large a size, nor so pushing. It was perfectly beastly when getting up in the morning to find one's sponge full of them. But on looking back at one's recently vacated bunk, one had a cruel gleam of satisfaction, for it might be noticed that many, which had been one's bedfellows, had now departed this life, having been rolled upon by a larger and heavier body.

At Singapore we caught a British-India Company's ship, and riding through the tail of a cyclone, arrived in due course

at Calcutta. But this ship was clean and nice, and there were ladies on board, an article of value we had not seen for many a long month, and we were well fed, and everyone was very good to us.

So this venture of a young subaltern into the unknown came to an end, and in a few days Judh Bir and I found ourselves back again with the old Guides on the North-West Frontier of India. We had been absent, mostly "without leave," for some nine months. Lord Roberts, in the kind and thoughtful manner he always had, gave us both the Burmah War medal, and was very nice indeed about our little effort. He was indeed a kind Chief.

CHAPTER VII

HAWKING IN YUSAFAZAI

YUSAFAZAI, or the Land of Joseph, lies on the North-West Frontier of India, not far from the Khyber Pass. There is, or was, a society formed with the very laudable purpose of discovering what had become of the Lost Tribes of Israel. The conclusion arrived at was, that the Ten Tribes had trekked gradually across Mesopotamia and Persia, and had at length found a home in Afghanistan, and there settled.

In support of this theory, was mentioned the similarity between Biblical names, and those in common use in Afghanistan to this day. Some of the most familiar are Ibrahim for Abraham ; Isak for Isaac ; Yakub for Jacob. Adam retains his name, and is still Adam ; whilst the name of our Saviour, Jesus, is written Isa, but pronounced Eesa. Amongst others comes Yusaf, the Afghan rendering of Joseph.

The particular Joseph with whom we are here concerned, was reputed to be a descendant of the late lamented Joseph, who it may be remembered, got unhappily mixed up in a matrimonial scandal some centuries ago. Afghan territory probably then stretched to the Indus, and Joseph settled in the land lying between the Kabul and the Indus Rivers, and named his province Yusafzai, or the Land of Joseph.

In the centre of Yusafzai, which is now in British territory, stands Mardan, which for the past seventy-five years has been the permanent station of the Corps of Guides. And it is of the hawks and of hawking with the Guides, that I am proposing here to give some account.

Long years ago, Harry Lumsden, then Colonel of the Guides, struck up a personal friendship with Sher Ali, Amir of Kabul. Lumsden, just before the Indian Mutiny of 1857, had been sent on a mission to Kandahar, and there came in touch with the reigning house of Afghanistan. The Amir Sher Ali had an immense admiration and respect for Lumsden, a soldier after

his own heart, resourceful, brave, and intrepid, and withal most genial. Besides being friendly as warriors, they were both sportsmen, and the Amir particularly, fond of hawking. Now there was a form of hawking, known only in Persia and Afghanistan, by which falcons were trained to work with dogs, in the pursuit of a gazelle known as the *chinkāra*, or ravine deer.

When Lumsden returned to India, the Amir promised to send him yearly, hawks and skilled hawkmen to show the Guides and their friends this ancient sport, to them new.

As anyone who knows anything about falconry is aware, a hawk can easily be trained to kill her natural prey, that is a bird smaller or not so swift in flight as herself. The word "her" is advisedly used; for the female of most species of hawk used in India, is larger, has a wider spread of wing, and consequently is swifter than the male. But very high skill in falconry, and great patience, are required to train a hawk to kill strange quarry, which are not birds, such as hares, foxes, jackals, and the like. A still higher degree in falconry has to be reached when deer hawking is aimed at.

The falcon employed in deer hawking is called a "*Cherug*," known in England as a "Saker." The Saker is, indeed, the bird which appears in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and is not indigenous west of Egypt. For deer hawking these birds have to be taken when quite young from the nest, and before they have ever killed feathers. Once a hawk has killed feathers she is no good for deer hawking. The nests of the *cherug* are found in the mountains of Balkh, north of Kabul, and it was thence that the Amir Sher Ali used to procure the birds, and each autumn send them to Lumsden. A first-year bird was generally found the most reliable; older birds got to fly cunning and if, as above mentioned, had once by chance killed a pigeon or other bird, were no more good after deer.

The training of these deer hawks was very interesting. They were never caged, but always lived on a hawkman's hand, or sat on a perch, with a string attached to their jesses.¹ From the very beginning they were taught to work for their food, for a hawk does not fly for sport, but to satisfy its hunger.

The hawkman would, at feeding time, hold the hawk on his

¹ Small leather thongs attached one to each leg.

right fist, and a piece of raw meat in his left hand, and would encourage the hawk to hop across, and get it. When this elementary lesson had been learnt, and the hawk had been accustomed to wear a hood, the distance would be prolonged. Thus the hawkman would take off the hood, hold up the hawk, so that she could see her piece of meat, which was now always placed between an old pair of gazelle horns, and fly her to it.

The bird thus, as it grew up, was daily taught to believe that there was no food in the world except that to be found between a pair of antlers, of a certain shape and appearance. The next step in the hawk's training was still more interesting. A life-sized stuffed gazelle, glass eyes and all, was set up on a stand furnished with small wheels, like a child's toy sheep, or dog. Between the antlers of the stuffed gazelle was placed the hawk's daily food. As soon as he had got accustomed to this fearsome beast, with the glass eyes, he would flutter across boldly and get his food.

The hawk, being now several months old, was encouraged to fly around a little, which it did by the light of nature, but all the time, being keen set, it was looking for its dinner. Directly therefore the hawk saw the stuffed gazelle, meaning dinner, she made straight for it, settling generally on the forehead as the most convenient place, and fed greedily. After a day or two, however, there was a new problem for the hawk to solve. A long rope had now been attached to the wheeled board on which the gazelle stood, and highly annoying persons kept pulling the blessed thing away, just as she was going to settle and feed. In this way the hawk was taught, that the getting of her food was not such a simple matter as at first it seemed. On the contrary, it was necessary to work for it.

Then came a very delicate piece of training, which was to teach two hawks to work together without fighting ; for two are required to be flown at a time, to have any chance of success with deer. Patience, and taking care to dash quickly up to the stuffed deer, and feed both plenteously and separately, before they had time to quarrel, achieved unanimity.

The hawks, taken from the nest in the spring, were now in the autumn, sent down by the Amir to Mardan. It may be mentioned that from their earliest days the hawks had been made accustomed to dogs, the shaggy-legged Persian grey-

hound, to be occasionally now seen at dog shows in England. These romped about, whilst the hawks were fed, and practically lived with them. This was to accustom hawks and dogs to each other, so that they might later be the more easily trained to work together.

At first Colonel Lumsden used these Persian greyhounds, but finding them uncertain in temper, and inclined to bite, and fight, and run riot, he ordered out greyhounds from England. The most famous of these was a dog called Tom, whose progeny might long be traced in the land, and an ancestor of my dog Baz, mentioned elsewhere.

The plan of campaign in deer hawking was this. The hooded hawks were carried on the fist either by riders or by men on foot. The field were mounted, each rider on the fleetest and most surefooted nag he possessed. The greyhounds were attached each by a slip leash to one or other of the riders' stirrups. Arrived at a likely nullah, in which the *chinkāra*, or ravine deer, might be found, two of the hawks were unhooded and cast loose. These two being keen set, would fly around and circle upwards, both eagerly looking out for something to eat, that food, as they had been trained to think, being only procurable from between a pair of antlers.

As likely as not the presence of men, and horses and dogs, would already have disturbed the deer, and headed by the stag they would be moving off. Instantly the hawks would spot the stag, and make straight for the delicious piece of raw liver, which curiously enough this species seemed to wear between their horns, instead of inside them. The moment it was seen that the hawks had spotted their quarry, two of the greyhounds were slipped. A greyhound is not a very intelligent beast, he has too low a forehead, but he runs for sport, and very soon learnt that if he wished to be in it, he must watch the hawks, and work with them.

The field, each man with his eyes fixed on the hawks, were now told to ride, and went off at full gallop. Real hairy work, as we used to remark, in our homely subaltern language. For one had to trust entirely to one's horse, his sure-footedness, his avoidance of holes, and pitfalls. Rocks might strew his path, deep and precipitous nullahs yawn before him, thorn bushes, as thick as leaves in Vallambrosa (wherever that is), bar the way. It was up to his good steed, to see and judge

for his master, for his master had his eyes glued on two little specks in the sky, and dared not even blink, much less glance downward, for fear of losing sight of them. It was wonderful how few accidents happened, and only one fatal one, to be mentioned later.

Meanwhile, this was happening in the far distance. The hawks, having overtaken the deer, would stoop in turn, striking for his horns, where the food should lie. The deer would be slightly surprised at this curious attack from the air, but shaking his head galloped on.

"Same old deer on wheels," the hawks were saying to each other. "Only it is moving rather faster than usual. Let's have another crash for it."

So they went on crashing, till at length they began to get seriously annoyed. The idiot pulling the string was really trying them too high to-day, and they really were beastly hungry.

Whilst this little duel between the air and land forces had been going on, the two dogs, and the field of riders, watching the hawks each time they rose to stoop again, hurried to their assistance. The Pathan saying, quoted elsewhere, is—

"On the first day that a *chinkāra* is born, a man may catch him; on the second day, a fleet dog may catch him; but on the third, no one but Allah."

The rôle therefore of the two hawks was to delay the deer, so as to give some lesser being than Allah a chance of catching him. Like all sports which are worthy of the name, the chances were very even in deer hawking, if anything in favour of the deer, for it was more often that he escaped than not.

When everything went right, the hawks keen set and in the highest fettle, the dogs not outpaced or lamed by loose stones or thorns, the riders not hopelessly barred out by impassable ravines or other difficulties, then the hawks earned their reward. It was not an unknown occurrence to find that one of the hawks, in his fierce hunger, had settled on the deer's forehead, with wings outstretched over his eyes. Naturally that slowed the deer down, and gave the dogs a chance to run in. But any way, it was a sport which required a very great amount of hunting craft and skill, both in the preparation and the execution.

As often as not the deer would get away, the hawks not having been able to delay him long enough for the dogs to come up. It was then that rather a quaint scene would be enacted. That the deer had escaped, and the hawks been beaten, was evident the moment it was seen that they were no longer rising and stooping. Riding for the point where the hawks had last been seen they would there be found sitting on the ground, panting violently, and manifestly using the most opprobrious language. At the mere man and his horse they looked only with fierce disdain. But when the poor tired dogs came loping up, their tongues hanging out as far as they could reach, and flopped down exhausted, in any scrap of shade, there was a scene.

At them flew the infuriated hawks, and cuffed them soundly with their talons, for not coming up in time.

" You lazy hounds ! Why, in the name of Allah, did you not come up quicker ? "

" We did our best," whimpered the dogs, " but the way was long and thorny ; the heat of the sun great."

" To hell with the thorns and the sun ! Ye are idle trencher-fed pariahs, and not fit to take part in the sport of kings."

More cuffing and abuse, till the poor dogs would come whining to their masters for protection, or hide beneath the belly of a horse.

After an unsuccessful flight the hawks are given just a bite of raw meat, enough to hearten them up, but not enough to remove the keen set when later they are again released after fresh quarry.

Those who have seen deer hawking in Afghanistan and Persia, say that the sport there given is very inferior to that described above. The Asiatic has entirely different ideas regarding sport to an Englishman. He goes out to slaughter indiscriminately, and in the most wholesale manner. Thus in deer hawking, his hawks instead of being taught to single out the stag, are allowed to tackle the does, and young.

The hawks naturally therefore select the smallest and weakest of a herd, and if it happens to be lame or ill, so much the better. The dogs unleashed, instead of being restricted to two, are released promiscuously by anybody or everybody who has a dog, and go off like a mixed hunting pack. The

riders instead of giving fair law, and riding a stern chase, will if possible head the deer, and surround and mob the wretched beast. Such a travesty of sport no Englishman can stand, and will as soon as courtesy permits leave the field, and vow never to attend another hunt of that sort.

Next to deer, the best sport in hawking in Yusafzai was given by the *Ubārā*, or bustard. This bustard is found, usually in company with several others, walking about amongst the thorn bushes picking up berries, or in or about crops of flowering mustard plant, his favourite food. He is slow to rise, for which law is given him, but once up, and a hawk after him, his speed is remarkable. He is a big powerful bird with great stretch of wing. If speed cannot save him, he has a second defensive battery, which he uses very cleverly.

Having got the hawk within range, he squirts from under his tail a glutinous matter, which directly it gets on to the hawk's wings, stops her speed entirely, indeed she can sometimes hardly fly at all, and the bustard escapes with ease. A bustard will on occasion give a very long flight, the longest on record with the Guides being a point of 11 miles, but as a rule he will be knocked out by the hawk, or escape, within a couple of miles or so.

Only one hawk at a time is flown after bustard, either a *cherug*, as used for deer hawking, or a *bairi*, which is a brown-eyed falcon, known in England as a peregrine. The *cherug*, though a larger bird, is not so fast as a *bairi*, and is from a sporting point of view better matched in speed with the bustard. A good *bairi* is a bit too fast for most bustards.

For duck hawking we found the *bairi* the only hawk with sufficient speed. And even she is left far behind, if it is a matter of a stern chase at even levels. To have a chance of killing a duck, the *bairi* must have 100 feet, or more, advantage in height in the air. The usual procedure is therefore to cast the hawk off, before reaching the pond, or jheel, where the duck may be found, and to keep her waiting on overhead. Then, when the duck are put up, the hawk, going down a slightly inclined plane, can get up speed enough to hit off the duck, at the point where her flight, and that of the duck, cross each other. As both are going at a tremendous pace, say 60 miles an hour, it requires the nicest judgment on the part of the hawk to strike her quarry in the fraction of a

second open to her. If the hawk misses, she sees no more of that duck, for it has gone like the wind.

Partridges are hawked in the same way. That is, a hawk is kept waiting up above, and the partridges put up under her. Here again it is strike, and hit or miss, but no pursuit.

Quail hawking is a little different. Quail are usually found in standing crops. A line of beaters is formed, for no one in the East seems in the least to object to their crops being walked through; and it apparently does them no harm. With the hawkman, the hawk on his fist in the centre, the line of beaters moves forward. The hawk is kept unhooded, and when a quail is put up the hawkman hurls the hawk towards her prey, thus giving her the necessary impetus.

A quail is a short-flighted bird, but exceedingly quick during that flight. It is also a very small bird. Here again it is a case of hit or miss. If the quail is missed, it just drops into the crops and runs like a hare out of danger, whilst the hawk returns to the lure. For quail hawking the small yellow-eyed goshawk is used.

As far as falconry as an art is concerned, that is, with endless patience and skill to teach a hawk to do something it would never do in a state of nature, Indians declare that to train a hawk to kill a kite is the highest. An Indian kite, and a *cherug* in the air, are very much alike, and can often only be distinguished from one another by their mode of flight. Therefore to train a *cherug* to tackle a kite is rather like training her to kill her twin sister or brother, and quite as hard.

For, be it repeated, a hawk kills only when she is hungry, and then, naturally, only some bird that she knows will assuage her hunger. She is quite convinced that sister *cherug* is as tough as a boot, and has no succulent and nourishing corners, and is therefore not going to mix herself up in a scuffle of that sort. The kite, she knows, is only an unclean and distant relation, which eats offal and scavenges for food, instead of eating clean fresh-killed meat. The art, therefore, in teaching a *cherug* to tackle a kite is to make her think that she has been mistaken, and that a kite is really a very delicious morsel to eat.

To achieve this result, rather an unworthy one perhaps, requires great patience, and is thus worked. The *cherug* is kept off killing all other birds; indeed it is best that she

should never have killed any bird, more especially one with white wings. Her lure is made out of brown kite's wings, and every evening when she is flown to the lure and seizes it, she finds neatly tucked away, under the feathers, a delicious piece of raw chicken's liver.

By repeating this manœuvre daily, the *cherug* gradually comes to connect a brown kite with a tit-bit which she loves above all things. And so the training goes on, till the *cherug* at last learns to tackle a kite and bring it down. But even then, and on every subsequent occasion, extreme care has to be taken that the *cherug* does not sup off the kite. For if she did the delusion would be gone for ever, and she would never fly at a kite again.

Therefore, sprinting across the plain for dear life is to be seen a gentleman of colour in loose flowing garments, who strives to arrive in time to insert the piece of chicken's liver, at the right spot under the kite's feathers.

One of the institutions intimately connected with hawking with the Guides in Yusafzai was a Hawking Lunch. This was not partaken of at the mess before starting, like the old-fashioned Hunt Breakfast in England, but followed along on pack mules. The meet would take place at some convenient spot, 7 or 8 miles out, at 11 a.m., and all regiments stationed at Nowshera, or Peshawur, were welcome. After hawking for two or three hours the mules would be signalled up, the table-cloth spread on the ground, and the fare set forth. Two items always formed a part of these historic lunches ; one was cold plum pudding, and the other a special brand of milk punch, a secret brew known only to the Guides. Thus fortified the field was taken again, and sport continued till the light failed.

There was only one fatal accident recorded in my time. As before mentioned, when a hawk was cast off, the field had to follow that hawk by sight, galloping head in air, and trusting to their steeds to see them safely through. People not accustomed to this form of hawking are liable to lose the true hawk, and pick up a wild one, or even a kite. It was so on this occasion. Two officers were riding all out, when one of them got his gaze shifted on to a kite, or a wild hawk. This he was following, when his course brought him right across the bows of the other officer, who was riding true. There was a tremendous crash, and the officer who was crossing was knocked over ; his head

hit the hard sun-baked ground, causing concussion of the brain, and a few hours afterwards he died.

This tragedy was one of three, the other two being unconnected with hawking, but all forming part of a very curious story. It appears that in the corner of the compound of a bungalow, occupied by three young officers at Nowshera, dwelt in a little hut a holy man, a Mahomedan Fakir. How he came there history does not relate, but it may be that he had settled on this spot before the bungalow was built. Anyway some cause of disagreement arose, and as Fakirs, for good and sufficient reasons, are not allowed in Cantonments, he was ordered out by the Cantonment Magistrate.

The Fakir apparently was firmly convinced that his expulsion was due to complaints made by the three officers. So before he went he came to the bungalow and cursed them. What other curses he hurled at them is not related, but the native servants declared that his main curse was, that all three officers should die within one year. The officers themselves did not know sufficient of the language to understand what the Fakir said, but seeing a very dirty and practically naked gentleman of colour making antics in front of them, merely laughed and told him to be gone.

Now comes the curious part. One of those three officers was the one who was killed when out hawking with the Guides. A few months later, during the hot weather, the second of the three officers, thinking he would have a bathe to cool himself before going to bed, went to the bridge of boats, which spanned the Kabul River. Walking out to the middle of the bridge he took off his clothes, told his servant to take them down to a point he intended to get out at, and dived in. He was never seen again, nor, it was stated, was his body ever found.

Still a little later in the hot weather, the scourge of most hot weathers, in those days, cholera in a virulent form broke out in Nowshera. Amongst those who were seized, and died of the disease, was the third officer. This is the story, as told me by the officer who, through no fault of his own, had knocked over the first of the doomed three.

The bells which are attached to a hawk's legs are there partly to enable them to be distinguished from wild hawks, and partly to help in recovering a bird which has been lost. These hawk bells have to be very light, and at the same time give

out a clear note, that can be heard a long way off. They are of brass, ball shaped, like we see round a small dog's neck in England, with a little iron ball inside, which rattles about with the slightest movement, and causes the bell to ring.

These hawk bells are only made in one place in India, a little village in the Attock district. So famed are these bells that people write for them from all over the world, and not only for use on hawks. Sir Henry Bushman, who came across them when commanding the 9th Lancers in India, used always to use a couple of them attached to the bottom of the collar of his pony, when driving in the country in England. Years after he had left India he wrote and asked me to send him some more, as he could get nothing in England to equal them.

A friend of mine, Thompson of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, wrote out from England and asked me to send him a couple of *cherugs* as an experiment. This hawk being unknown west of Egypt, seemed to point to the fact that that particular breed could not live in Europe, though as far as climate goes the *cherug* or saker came from parts of the world, like Balkh, where it is exceedingly cold in the winter. In the East each hawk, or pair of hawks, has a personal attendant, who rarely leaves his charge. If he goes to the bazaar for food or a chat, he carries a hawk on his wrist. His charges sleep on the end of a *charpoy*, or native bed, in the same room as himself.

One therefore becomes possessed of the idea that a hawk can never be left alone, and must always have someone in attendance. Thompson, who had experience of hawks in other lands, asked me to send a man with the *cherugs* to Bombay, and there hand them over to the cook on board a homeward-bound troopship, addressed to him. The cook on board a troopship, like the butcher on board before cold storage days, was a privileged and evidently experienced person, who was allowed to take charge of all sorts of pets, from dogs and monkeys, to parrots and mongooses. But I had never heard of his being given charge of a hawk.

I thought therefore that the two *cherugs* would, after a few days, follow the green parrots of the soldiers, and add another little fluff of feathers to the Indian Ocean. In those days every old soldier, when his time was up, used to apply to take home his parrot, invariably the small green variety common to India. Troopship regulations laid down the exact proportion

of live animals, or birds, or reptiles, according to the number of troops on board, which were authorised to be carried.

Thus 2 per cent. of dogs, 1 per cent. of monkeys, 10 per cent. of parrots, and so on, were allowed free passages at the owners' risk, and with no obligations as regards feeding. The dog allowance was usually more popular with officers, and the green parrot contingent with the men. Very few of these green parrots used to reach England, being unaccustomed to the sea, and the changes of climate experienced during the voyage. So that it used to be sadly averred that you could trace a troopship home by the defunct green parrots that lay on the face of the waters.

Strangely enough, however, Thompson's two *cherugs*, casually fed by the cook on any old stray bits of raw meat, arrived safely in England. Not only did they arrive, but in the *Field* not long after we read of their successful flights in England.

Hawking, though not really of much interest to the field, as is fox hunting, is real sport to the owner, trainer and flyer. It is as engaging nowadays as it was to the gallant knights and fair ladies, who of old took their pleasure, and enjoyed their leisure, in that way. It is one of the oldest sports in which Englishmen have taken part, and the only reason for its popularity having declined in England, is the difficulty in finding quarry that is evenly matched with the hawk flown at it.

CHAPTER VIII

A FRONTIER WAR

THE next few years were spent far away from the sound of bullets—except at Bisley—and occupied in such peaceful, but important pursuits, as going through the Staff College, getting married, and travelling in Japan. It was not till 1895, therefore, that for me the tocsin sounded again. In the spring of that year, rather an astonishing thing happened.

The British Agent, Surgeon-Major G. Robertson, and his escort of 400 Indian soldiers, found themselves besieged and in great straits in the Fort of Chitral. This state of affairs came about somehow like this, and to refresh my memory I have looked up a book, written at the time by my brother Frank and by me (mostly by Frank).¹ There had been a rare mess-up, in those parts, and perhaps it may be well to give a brief account of the main sequence of events—mostly murders.

When the old Mehtar, or Ruler of Chitral died, a few years previously, leaving no less than seventeen sons, the trouble started. Owing to the higher rank of their mothers, two of these sons, Nizam and Afzul, stood out as the most prominent claimants to the vacant throne. At the time of his father's death, Afzul, the younger, happened to be in Chitral, whilst his elder brother, Nizam, was away acting as governor of Yasin, some 160 miles distant. Afzul promptly seized the throne, together with the treasure, and arms, in Chitral fort; and then proceeded to murder all of his brothers on whom he could lay hands—just to remove them out of temptation's way. He killed a goodly number, and then set out, with an army, to defeat and if possible slay Nizam, at Yasin. But Nizam thought discretion the better part of valour, and fled to Gilgit, and there placed himself under the protection of the British.

Afzul returned in triumph to Chitral, and proclaimed himself

¹ *The Relief of Chitral*, by Captain G. J. Younghusband and Captain F. E. Younghusband (Macmillan).

Mehtar, with the acclamation of his people. He sat thus securely on his throne for two whole months ; and everybody, including the Government of India, thought he was there for life. But Afzul had not been quite careful enough, or let us say, sufficiently copious, in getting rid of all possible claimants to the throne. True, he had slaughtered a great many of his brothers, all in fact who seemed dangerous, and had driven his chief rival into exile ; but unfortunately he had forgotten his uncles. One of these, rather a dashing fellow, named Sher Afzul, had a few years previously, in the old Mehtar's time, made a bid for the throne ; but had been defeated and driven into exile in Badakshan, which is a province of Afghanistan.

Now the border of Badakshan is only 47 miles from Chitral fort, so Sher Afzul, collecting about a hundred horsemen, thought he would make another dash for sovereignty. Killing the Governor of the valley, through which he passed, for fear he should give the alarm, and collecting a few more adherents as he went, Sher Afzul arrived, at dead of night, before Chitral fort, and demanded its instant surrender.

His nephew Afzul, instead of defending the fort, which certainly could not be taken by a hundred horsemen, was misguided enough to go out, and parley with Sher Afzul. Needless to say, he was shot dead at once, and Sher Afzul reigned in his stead.

Surely this would be the end of the trouble ? Not at all ! Hearing that his brother Afzul had been killed, Nizam, who was still in Gilgit, plucked up courage, and determined to oust the usurping uncle. Gathering such forces as he could, in the upper valleys, and joined as he advanced by adherents, he was met by a force of 1,200 men sent by Sher Afzul to oppose him. These, however, instead of fighting, went over to the invader, and Nizam, thus reinforced, continued his triumphant progress to Chitral.

Uncle Sher Afzul, seeing that the game was up, mounted his horse, and made the best of his way back into Badakshan. Nizam now in his turn assumed the Mehtarship, and to show his friendship to those who had been kind to him in his exile, invited a British mission to visit Chitral. The mission consisted of Surgeon-Major G. Robertson, my brother Frank, Lieut. the Hon. C. G. Bruce, and Lieut. J. H. Gurdon, with an escort of fifty men of the 15th Sikhs.

My brother Frank, with Gurdon as his No. 2, remained for a time at Chitral, when, four or five months later, Surgeon-Major Robertson returned to Gilgit, leaving with them the escort of Sikhs. In the autumn of that year, the present Foreign Secretary, the Marquess Curzon, then a young Member of Parliament, who was travelling about Asia enlarging his mind, arrived in Chitral territory, and with Frank as his guide, philosopher, and friend, saw a good deal more of Chitral, and its ruler, than he would otherwise have succeeded in doing.

The Mehtar was most civil, probably thinking that an M.P. generally sat on the right hand of the Queen of England, and was her chief adviser. Anyway, Frank records that the Mehtar asked them to dinner, and in return dined with them, and that they all played polo together. It must have been an inspiring sight, that game of polo, with Lord Curzon in the midst of it. For be it known, a game of polo, as played at Chitral, is quite different to the game as played at Hurlingham.

In Chitral the polo ground is just a grassy roadway, with stone walls, 3 to 4 feet high, running along each side of it. The opposing teams consist of a large number of players, generally eleven or twelve a side, and these two opposing forces, in opening the game, charge each other with the greatest violence. Somewhat like two troops of cavalry charging each other, under circumstances where neither can elude the shock, owing to the flanking stone walls. St. John's Ambulance had not then penetrated so far as the Hindu Kush, but it would have had active practice, during and after a polo match in those parts. Not only do these stalwarts charge each other, but during the game, in the excitement engendered, they are not very careful about the wielding of their polo sticks, and many a warrior, who has survived the initial charge, may in the course of the game have his head staved in, or his eye knocked out.

But the reign of Nizam was not to be long, and he too was destined to come to a violent end. Frank and Gurdon, with the Sikh escort, had left Chitral, but were told to remain at Mastuj, which was 65 miles away on the road to Gilgit. Nizam was very fond of sport, and whilst out hawking was shot dead, at the instigation of his half-brother, a youth of nineteen, named Amir. Nizam had fully intended that the funeral

should be the other way round, but had postponed action till a more favourable time, with fatal results to himself. When this fresh tragedy occurred, Frank had gone home on leave, but it so chanced that Gurdon, with an escort of eight Sikhs, happened to be paying another visit to Chitral. Amir immediately came to Gurdon, and asked that the British Government might recognise him as Mehtar of Chitral.

But the British Government was naturally a little bewildered with these quick changes, and took time to consider its attitude, sending Surgeon-Major Robertson, the Chief Political Agent, to make enquiries on the spot. Amir was a miserable specimen, which fact was recognised, not only by his own people, but by powerful neighbours. To the south was Umra Khan of Jhandul, a noted fighter, who had long set covetous eyes on Chitral. And there was, still loose about in Afghanistan, uncle Sher Afzul, who having already made two attempts on the throne, now saw a favourable opportunity for making a third.

These two worthies foregathered, and as a result Sher Afzul sent an impudent letter to the British Agent, summarily ordering him to clear out of Chitral. Surgeon-Major Robertson sent a dignified reply, saying he would stay where he was, awaiting the instructions of the British Government. At the same time he took the precaution of ordering up his escort of 400 men, 100 of whom were of the 14th Sikhs, and the remainder Kashmir Infantry, to emphasise this resolve. Umra Khan and Sher Afzul, with their combined forces, then invaded Chitral territory, and took Kila Dros, the southern fortress. The Chitralis, at first, resented this invasion, engineered and assisted by their hereditary enemies the Pathans of Jhandul. They therefore took up a strong position, some 12 miles south of Chitral fort, and prepared to die in defence of their hearths and homes. On second thoughts, however, they decided that on the whole it was better not to die for their hearths and homes, or any other foolish cause, and in pursuit of this idea went bodily over to the enemy.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish, as no doubt Surgeon-Major Robertson remarked. The British Agent, his officers, and escort, shut up in somebody else's fort, hundreds of miles from anywhere, and with the whole country round up against them. Happily at the moment we had the right sort of people at the

head of affairs ; the good old British brand, which does not palaver, but just hits back, hard and true, those who invite that treatment.

On March 3 the wires were cut, and the little British force, lost in the far-off great mountains, was to all human knowledge engulfed, destroyed, no more.

“ Only a few British officers, and a few hundred Indian soldiers ! Sad ! But what does it really matter ? ”

Happily, as the British Empire was run in those days, it did matter. It was not open to any nation, small or great, on however minor, or major, a scale, with impunity to beard the old Lion. He was deemed by some to be too old, they hoped so. He sometimes seemed sleepy, they laughed in their sleeves. But when the occasion arose, somehow the old hero appeared to be quite himself again, as young and fresh as in the days of his greatest achievements. The days when he wrote Cressy, Poictiers, Agincourt, Trafalgar, Waterloo, Plassey, Assaye, on the walls of history. Very far therefore from abandoning Robertson and his comrades to their fate, and then making long speeches in Parliament, to demonstrate the extraordinary wisdom of having done so, immediate steps were taken to rescue him, and at the same time uphold the prestige of the British name throughout Asia. Now this was no mean task, and very costly, but the statesmen of that day happily were statesmen ; and the soldiers were, as of old, ready and willing to take on any job, however arduous, and however seemingly hopeless.

To give some idea of the difficulty of rescuing the slender garrison of Chitral, it may be mentioned that the nearest British force lay in the Peshawur Valley, some 200 miles to the south. And intervening were great ranges of unmapped mountains inhabited by warlike and hostile tribes. To the east of Chitral a single regiment, the 32nd Sikhs Pioneers, lay out road-making, between Chilas and Gilgit, some 200 to 400 miles away. Further, it was known that the garrison only had supplies for about one month, and had not too much ammunition. The greatest promptness therefore was necessary, and it was forthcoming. The 1st Division, under Sir Robert Low, was ordered to mobilise, and fight its way through the mountains ; and Colonel Kelly, with 400 of the 32nd Sikh Pioneers and

two guns, was told to worry along, as fast as he could, from Gilgit, so as to threaten Chitral from the north-east.

By quite an accidental piece of good fortune, my own connection with the Relief of Chitral came early. When I rejoined the Guides, from the Staff College, some five years before, being then full of zeal, and simply overflowing with strategy and tactics, I amused myself by working out in detail a campaign against Chitral. Not that there was then the remotest chance of any such campaign taking place. The drawback in making out this scheme was, that the country, some 200 miles in extent, through which the troops must pass, was practically unmapped and unknown territory. True, one or two men of the Guides, had in previous years worked through from the Peshawur Valley to Chitral ; but their reports, though excellent, gave not much more than a tracing of the routes they had followed.

Looking at it with the eye of a Staff officer, detailed to work out a plan of campaign, there was not very much to go upon. So I approached our Commandant, Colonel A. G. Hammond, V.C., on the subject of being allowed to go, and try to get through myself. Colonel Hammond was a very brave man, who would himself take any risks in action ; but he turned down my proposal at once, with the laconic reply—

“ What’s the good, you would be killed half an hour after you had crossed the frontier.”

It is no good going against one’s Colonel, and besides I didn’t particularly wish to be killed half an hour after I had crossed the frontier, for that would have done nobody any good.

Roddy Owen, to whom the same idea occurred a year or two later, came to me, and asked me to help him with men, and advice. I got him both, but he was stopped by the Political Officer. However, my plan of campaign was made out, as best it could be, and was accompanied by rough maps, constructed from the information gathered by men of the Guides, and from conversations with tribesmen from across the border. Then I poked the whole thing away in a drawer, and took to polo ; for we were working up a pretty useful polo team at that time.

Some years afterwards, the aforementioned bomb fell at Chitral, and remembering my little plan of campaign, I dug it

out, and it was sent to General A. A. Kinloch, who commanded at Peshawur. General Kinloch read it, and sent it on to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir George White. In a surprisingly short time, came back a wire from the Military Secretary, Ian Hamilton, appointing me to the Staff of Sir Robert Low, who was to command the Relief Force. I was naturally frightfully pleased, but at the same time a little tickled over a little matter, which will be related in due course.

By way of getting me to work, General Kinloch handed over the whole of the Staff work connected with the mobilisation of the Force. And a fairly heavy job it was. I remember once, after a few hours' sleep, waking up with a pile of sixteen "Urgent" telegrams in their yellow jackets, on my pillow. My faithful old bearer, Luckoo, seeing I was worn out, refused to allow anyone to wake me, but one by one piled the yellow envelopes on my pillow—so that I might not waste a moment when I awoke.

This was the first attempt that the Indian Army had made to mobilise a unit, of the size of a Division, on a preconceived and appointed plan. The mobilisation of the Indian Army was then in the hands of quite a junior Staff officer, Major G. V. Kemball, R.A.,¹ and right well did he perform this first considerable effort. It may be noticed that no Major-Generals, nor K.C.B.'s, were required in those days. It was all done by a simple Major—but then we were very poor, and only rich armies can afford more expensive Staff officers.

Not one of the least of Major Kemball's problems was, that he had not only to mobilise the men and guns, and their ammunition, but 28,000 pack animals, which were required to carry the food and ammunition and camp equipment for man and beast; for no wheeled traffic could move over the mountains. This all at a little roadside station like Nowshera, where there were no facilities whatever, and which was fed only by a single line of a solitary railway. To give one instance of the difficulty: when a train arrived from the south, with troops, or animals, or stores, it could be unloaded on the only platform, but to enable it to turn round, and go back for another load, it had generally to run up to Peshawur, 26 miles off, before it could do so. The empty train then had

¹ Now Major-General Sir George Kemball, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

to fight its way back along a single line, against the upward rush of full trains. Yet, in spite of these enormous difficulties, Major Kemball in eleven days concentrated the whole of the Division, its transport, hospitals, ammunition and commissariat, and it marched off on the 1st day of April, 1895, on its historic venture.

Just before the Division started, came a telegram from Howard Hensman, who was *The Times* correspondent in India, asking if I would act as amateur war correspondent to that paper, pending the arrival of the real article. I asked Sir Robert Low, and at first he said "No," but later, sending for me, said—

"Perhaps you had better accept. It will be doing *The Times* a civil turn."

So I took on temporarily, little knowing that the real article was my brother Frank, who was hastening out, and arrived about three weeks later. I am afraid I was a shocking bad war correspondent, whilst Frank was excellent.

As we were marching along the open plain, and approaching the Malakand Pass, the first great nut to crack, Sir Bindon Blood, the Chief of the Staff, with whom I was riding, suddenly looked to his right, and began pointing out the extreme beauty of the view. As this particular view had been familiar to me for about fifteen years, and a bloody battle was in the near offing, it was really not interesting me very much.

After we had ridden on a bit, Sir Bindon turned round, and explained that he had drawn my attention away, because at that moment we were passing the King's Own Scottish Borderers, and marching in the ranks, disguised as a private soldier, was the Colonel of the 4th Dragoon Guards. He was afraid I might recognise him, and give the show away. This was the redoubtable Mickey Doyne, who, all other means of getting on service having failed, got the Colonel of the K.O.S.B.'s to take him as a private.

These things do not generally happen, outside Charles O'Malley books, but here and now was the Irish Colonel of an Irish Cavalry regiment, plodding along, with a pack on his back, and a rifle on his shoulder, in the ranks of a Scottish regiment! Colonel Doyne, thus disguised as a private, took a gallant part next day in the storming of the Malakand Pass,

and then his ten days' leave (to shoot !) having expired, he turned homewards.

In the middle of the night, down at Dargai, a few miles back, Raleigh Egerton was asleep in his tent, when he was suddenly awakened by the entrance of a very tired-looking British soldier. Thinking the man was drunk, or had made a mistake, Raleigh was just deliberating whether to pop him in the guard-room, or merely guide his footsteps elsewhere, when the British soldier announced that he was Colonel Mickey Doyne, and added, "For God's sake give me a drink." Raleigh gave him food, and a drink diluted with whisky, and a doss down on the ground by his bed, and in the morning hired an *ekka*,¹ and packed him off to resume command of the 4th Dragoon Guards.

As we approached the Malakand Pass for the great assault, the rain came down in torrents, a perfectly dreadful night. Not the nice gentle rain we are so accustomed to in England, but a shower bath, several miles in area. Nor are there cunning drains, and handy rivers to carry off the water. No, it comes down in thousands of gallons, on to a land parched as hard as a pavement. This hasty rain has not time to soak in, but just runs down any slope like a torrent, or stands and forms a swamp or a lake, where the ground is level, or depressed. Happily there is also a fierce sun in those parts, and next morning it shone with all its splendour.

So the battle, though delayed, took place, and a very fine and inspiring sight it was. Most soldiers in a battle see little except what happens in their immediate vicinity, but from where Sir Robert Low stood, it was like a great drama. Seated in the stalls, so to speak, and seeing every incident in that clear atmosphere, of the gallant combat taking place up the side of the rugged mountain, straight before the spectators.

The enemy's position was of extraordinary strength, and one which in the hands of an organised enemy would have taken a week to capture. The enemy's numbers were afterwards found to be about 12,000, about half of whom had firearms, whilst the remainder were told off to carry to the rear, not only the wounded, but the killed, for no tribesman trusts even his killed to the tender mercies of those against whom he is fighting.

¹ A one-horsed light vehicle capable of covering great distances at a steady trot.



THE GUIDES INFANTRY (RELIEF OF CHITRAL).

1860 - 1861
A. H. D. & Co.

Some accursed Hindu he thinks might get hold of the corpse and burn it ; thus permanently disqualifying the dead warrior from entering into the joys of the Mahomedan paradise, where all the most beautiful ladies are reputed to dwell. In the intervals of carrying off dead and wounded, and in return bringing back water for the thirsty fighters, these useful auxiliaries hurled down stones, and huge boulders, on to the heads of the attackers.

Sir Robert Low sent the Guides Infantry, and the 4th Sikhs, to take a peak 5,000 feet high on the right of the enemy's position, and when this movement had made its effect felt, launched the main frontal attack. It was a great sight to see the way in which the King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Gordon Highlanders, and the King's Royal Rifles, stormed this great rocky crest, known as the Malakand Pass. And ably were they supported by three mountain batteries of the Royal Artillery.

The crest, after a fierce struggle, was won, and then the Bedfordshire Regiment and 37th Dogras, taking a right-handed swerve, attacked, pushed past the enemy's lines of defence, and thrust on down into the Swat Valley beyond. The enemy's casualties were 500 killed and 1,500 wounded, whilst our own were wonderfully small considering, some seventy all told. It was a nice tight little battle, fought on the best British lines, when dealing with Asiatics—hit him in the eye, straight and strong, whatever the disparity in numbers, or strength of position.

When, during the storming of the Malakand Pass, Sir Robert Low had, owing to the extent of the position, and the paucity of his troops, used up his last regiment, he thought it prudent to order up another regiment or two, in case of need. He therefore told me to hop on to my horse, and go and fetch them. General Gatacre's brigade, which had been following on as hard as it could, where all were racing for a goal 200 miles away, must be some 6 miles back.

So, as instructed, I hopped on to my horse, and made the best pace I could down a very bouldery valley, towards Dargai. During the course of this ride, various nefarious persons took cock shots at me, from either side of the valley, and one gay fellow, by luck, or good shooting, got my horse through the foreleg. But my horse was an Arab, and good at that, and

making light of his wound carried me through. Having given my message to General Gatacre, who promptly sent on a Gurka regiment, I was looking about for something to carry me back, when who should turn up but my own syce, with my second charger. Mutual congratulations, and a change of saddles effected, not without many wah ! wah's ! from the syce at the plight of No. 1.

Whilst the change of saddles was taking place, I noticed a soldier digging a hole in the ground, and by way of a chat, asked him what he was doing. He said he was going to put up a telegraph pole.

One of those infrequent brainy flashes went through my head.

" Telegraph pole. Head of telegraph line, *Times* correspondent."

As a result of this flash, I said to the soldier—

" Will you take a telegraph message ? "

Without undue emotion he answered—

" Yes, sir."

So I sat down on a rock, and in a few minutes wrote a brief account of the battle, so far as it had gone. The soldier was as good as his word, and the telegram went off as soon as he had got a buzzer up.

Thus it most curiously happened, that *The Times*, in London, got news of the battle many hours, and I think days, before anyone else. So early, indeed, that the first news which the Viceroy, and Commander-in-Chief at Simla, had of the battle, was through London and *The Times* ! *The Times* was frightfully pleased, and sent a very costly telegram to say so.

My second horse now being ready, off I went back to Sir Robert Low, to tell him his reinforcements were well on the way. But before going on, those who love horses must not be left in suspense over the fate of No. 1. The bullet must have been from a small-bore rifle, and fired at just the right range to make a small hole. It had gone clean in and out, doing no harm, and in a few weeks No. 1 was quite well, and more bumptious than ever.

A very spirited little cavalry affair took place at Khar, on the day after the Malakand was captured. A brigade of our infantry had been pushed down into the Swat Valley, so as to cover the stupendous task of getting the baggage and

supplies of the force over the Pass. The enemy, mistaking for weakness this defensive attitude, had gradually, all day, been massing in large numbers to attack the covering brigade. Some partial attacks had been driven off with great steadiness by the 37th Dogras, but towards evening, the enemy grew bolder, and was evidently contemplating a heavy night attack on the brigade in bivouac.

Somehow or other, but goodness knows how, Captain R. B. Adams, with Lieutenant G. M. Baldwin, and 50 sabres of the Guides Cavalry, had managed to struggle over the Malakand Pass, and pushed down into the Swat Valley. Scouting carefully round a spur, they suddenly saw some 2,000 of the enemy advancing down the valley, to take part in the grand attack. With the true Cavalry spirit, and quite regardless of the great disparity in numbers, Adams¹ and Baldwin promptly charged the masses. It was a brave sight, and as it was part of my own regiment, it was even more entralling. I had been sent down to Khar, with a message from Sir Robert Low, and thus happened again to sit in the front row of the stalls.

The Guides were charging through green corn, standing about two feet high, so that every man and horse stood out clear. The enemy had never seen cavalry before, and certainly did not know that any were over the Pass. Like all mountaineers, caught out in the open plain, they felt not only out of their element, but were suddenly attacked by a new brand of enemy. Fierce warriors, mounted on horses, brandishing swords, and as they galloped, yelling in a blood-curdling manner. The whole 2,000 thereupon decided with one accord that this was no place for them, and made haste to depart. But as even the fleetest of foot cannot run fast through standing corn, the Guides were on them like a whirlwind, and killed many, whilst the more fleet or fortunate dispersed, and departed incontinently to their homes.

Through the countryside, they spread the most blood-curdling stories of the great virulence of cavalry; and inculcated the doctrine that whenever any of these horrible fellows appeared on the horizon it behoved the warrior to get on top of the highest available mountain, and there remain. So great was the moral effect of this gallant little cavalry

¹ Captain Adams earned the Victoria Cross in an equally brilliant charge a year or two later, and Baldwin got the D.S.O. on this occasion.

action, that British prisoners, hundreds of miles away, heard from their captors the wonderful story.

A few days later the cavalry had another nice little chance. The task of forcing the Swat River was entrusted to General Waterfield, known as the *Lâl Bâlu*, or the Red Bear. Facing the main and best-known passage, was a somewhat formidable fort, named Ramorah. This fort General Waterfield proceeded to shell, with great vigour, but without much effect, having at his disposal nothing but the light mountain guns, which could be carried on mules. However it kept the gunners, and the enemy, amused, whilst the cavalry sauntered off, casually and unobserved, up-stream. A mile or two up, they found a practical but little-used ford, not too deep, though horses were liable to be swept off, and had to swim.

The Guides Cavalry, and the 11th Bengal Lancers, were the regiments concerned, and were soon across, without any loss to speak of. Making a detour round they got behind Ramorah, and the game was up. The enemy fled like lamp-lighters, and the cavalry after them. Though much hampered by the stony ground, the 11th Bengal Lancers soon drew up, and falling on the enemy, killed many, and severely frightened the rest. The general result was, that not only could the infantry now cross, without loss, but the fame and moral effect of cavalry was still further noised abroad, amongst the heathen.

In Ramorah, as the men were searching about for supplies and hidden arms, a soldier found concealed in the roof of a hut a long straight British cavalry officer's sword. The sword was made by Wilkinson, the well-known swordmaker in Pall Mall, and had a number stamped upon it. Wilkinson was communicated with, and the number quoted. After some months an answer came, saying that the sword had been sold in 1876 or 1877, to an officer named Bellew; but there was no record of the regiment to which the officer belonged. In the Guides had been an officer, of some eminence, of that name, and the matter was therefore referred to us. But our Bellew was a doctor, and not in the least likely to have a long straight cavalry sword. His weapon of defence would undoubtedly have been a curved scimitar, as worn by the other officers, and the men.

The only other Bellew we could suggest was "Boy"

THE GUNDE'S CAVALRY (RELIEF OF CHITRAL).



Bellew, who had been serving in the 10th Hussars in India some years previous. Bellew, now Lord Bellew, was communicated with, and it was found that the sword was indeed his.

How it found its way to Ramorah was rather curious. Bellew was serving with his regiment, the 10th Hussars, in the Afghan War, some sixteen years before. The sword being long and heavy, and he himself small and light, he exchanged swords with Harford, of the same regiment, who had a lighter one. When Harford, with a troop of the 10th Hussars, was drowned, whilst fording the Kabul River in the spring of 1879,¹ he was wearing Bellew's sword. Harford's body was swept away, and was washed ashore, many miles down, where the villagers stole the sword, and anything else of value on his person. For sixteen years the sword had wandered about, passing from hand to hand, amongst the tribesmen, till at last it was thus curiously recovered, and sent back to Lord Bellew.

Early one morning, Headquarters being then at Khar, Sir Bindon Blood sent for me, and told me to ride off at once to the Panjkora River, and bring back a report on the fords, and other means of crossing. I said "Very good, sir," and trust I did not betray any astonishment.

Now the Panjkora River was at least 30 miles ahead. One big river the Swat, for certain, and possibly a range of mountains had to be crossed (for our maps were very defective). Moreover, as far as I was aware, we had no troops beyond the Swat River, so that the greater part of the ride would be alone through the enemy's country. As I rode along, there did not seem any very rosy chances of seeing the Alhambra or the Empire again. For the chances of getting through to the Panjkora River, or, having reached it, of returning, seemed somewhat nebulous. However, as a soothing counter thought, it occurred that they certainly would not have sent me if they thought I could not bring back the information required.

That was a weary ride. My mount was an Arab pony, Saladin by name, and as everyone knows an Arab is generally a poor hack, a slow walker, and almost invariably a bad trotter. Saladin was both, his only pace was a canter, or gallop; as

¹ See p. 16.

whole force with admiration. Most unhappily, just at the last moment, before the bridge-head was reached, after hours of fighting, the gallant Colonel, who was with the rearmost sections, was mortally wounded. He was the third Battye to die for his country in the Guides. First Quentin Battye, at Delhi ; next Wigram Battye, at Futtehabad ; and now Fred Battye, on the Panjkora.

The Guides, though fiercely assaulted all night, held staunchly to the bridge-head ; their defence greatly assisted by star shell, thrown over and beyond them, by batteries on the near bank. In the morning there were no signs of the flood abating, indeed the melting of the snow on the mountains was likely to increase the rise of the waters.

To construct another floating-bridge appeared useless, for assuredly it too would be swept away. It was therefore decided to construct a suspension bridge, lower down, where the river, though a deep tearing torrent, was only 100 feet wide. It was during the construction of this bridge, that a very gallant feat was performed by Major F. Aylmer, R.E.,¹ who was in charge of the work.

The cables, supporting the suspension bridge, were to be made of telegraph wire, the only available material, and a single strand of this wire had been got across, and secured, as a preliminary. This was now swinging slack, some 3 or 4 feet above the torrent.

At this particular moment, a small raft, which was being used as a swinging bridge, about a mile up-stream, broke loose, and capsized. On it were two soldiers of the Devonshire Regiment, and two native boatmen. The boatmen, and the oars, were swept away, but the two men of the Devonshire Regiment managed to right the raft, and clambered on to it ; and away they went racing down the stream. General Gatacre, who saw the accident, at once galloped off down the river bank, to the point where Aylmer was building his bridge, and told him what had happened. Scarcely had he finished speaking, when the raft appeared coming round a bend, and racing down at a great pace. Only one man could be distinguished on it, and only one there was, for the other soldier had jumped off, in the hopes of swimming ashore, and had been drowned in the attempt.

¹ Now Lieut.-General Sir Fenton Aylmer, V.C., K.C.B.



BRIDGE OVER THE PANJORA RIVER (RELIEF OF CHITRAL).
It was from the slack wire of this bridge, before the roadway was put in,
that Major F. Aymer, V.C., rescued the soldier.

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Aylmer was one of the bravest men that ever stepped. Only a year or two before, he had earned the Victoria Cross, leading an assault on the fort at Nilt. On that occasion, in face of a murderous fire at point-blank range, he placed a demolition charge at the foot of the gate of the fort, and blew it open, thus giving entrance to the assaulting troops. In doing this his right hand was badly shattered, several fingers being blown off, thus leaving it permanently maimed, and practically useless.

Even though thus handicapped, Aylmer did not hesitate a moment. Casting a quick glance up-stream, and judging by the current the most likely point at which the raft would pass under his slack wire, Aylmer hooked his maimed arm over it, and slid out till he was dangling over mid-stream at that point. Down came the raft, at racing speed, and to it still clinging was the Devonshire soldier. Everyone held their breath, and thoughts raced as fast as the torrent.

Could Aylmer catch the man? If caught, could he, with his left arm, support the weight of a full-grown heavy soldier? Could his maimed right arm stand the strain? Would not the wire cut into his arm, so painfully, as to cause him to relax his hold? Above all, would a single strand of telegraph wire bear the double weight of the two men? And if the wire stood, would the supports on each bank bear the side swing that was inevitable?

In five seconds, all these questions were answered. Aylmer grabbed the soldier. With his left arm he upheld him, whilst the raft swept to immediate destruction just below. Aylmer's maimed right arm, bent over the slack wire, held like a grappling iron. The wire swayed, and tautened, but broke not. The supports tottered, and rocked, but stood hardily.

Then ropes, and willing hands, soon pulled both rescuer, and rescued, ashore. Aylmer thereupon continued his work on the bridge, the soldier walked back to his camp to report himself present and correct; and the war went on.

But one of the most extraordinary things, almost as wonderful as the deed itself, was that the Royal Humane Society's medal was never given to Aylmer for this extraordinary act of bravery and devotion. He ought to have had the Stanhope Gold Medal, for the bravest act of the year, we all thought.

The suspension bridge, having been completed in forty-eight hours, the whole force proceeded to cross, covered by the Guides. Only one horse could be on the bridge at one time ; and infantry, even in single file, had to leave several yards interval between each man ; whilst the ammunition, and stores, had to be man-handled across.

During the whole of this time, the bridge was swinging about in a most disconcerting manner ; whilst beneath was a roaring torrent, which led to certain destruction on the rocks, or in the rapids below. How the cavalry, and the gun mules of the batteries got over, was a marvel ; but assuredly they did, and quickly too, so that they were soon scouting ahead, up the valleys, and again thoroughly frightening the enemy. The Division having thus crossed the Panjkora River, formed up and advanced to the attack of Umra Khan's main force.

As we were moving along, who should ride up but my brother Frank, straight from England, whence he had hastened to take over his job as correspondent of *The Times*. I was heartily glad to see him, not only for himself, but because I really had not time to do justice to such exacting and responsible work. *The Times* was, however, exceedingly kind and considerate to me, and overlooked my many deficiencies. One of these had been a very sad one. I wrote out a full account of the Guides' fight on the Panjkora River, and myself handed it in to the telegraph clerk. But that faithless fellow put it in his pocket and forgot all about it for thirteen days ! Horror and dismay in Printing House Square ! A more experienced hand would have sat on that telegraphist's head, till he had actually seen the message being ticked off on the machine.

The Mundah battle did not prove to be a very formidable affair. The enemy were easily defeated and dispersed, and the fort of Mundah occupied. The effect of this battle was, however, far-reaching. This was April 17, and the following day the news reached Sher Afzul, who was commanding the forces besieging Chitral. That General, appreciating the dangerous position he was in, immediately raised the siege, and endeavoured to escape. But the net had closed in on him, and he and 1,500 of his stalwarts were made prisoners, whilst the rest of his force dispersed to their homes. Two days later Colonel Kelly, who, with a few hundred men, had made a

wonderful and desperate march from Gilgit, entered Chitral from the north, and the siege was at an end.

The defence of Chitral was an epic in itself, and deserved all the high encomiums bestowed on it at the time. At first Captain Colin Campbell, of the Central India Horse, was in command, but he being badly wounded, the honour fell on Captain C. V. Townshend, of the same regiment, and later known as Major-General Sir Charles Townshend, the defender of Kut. The siege lasted for forty-seven days, and the defence was carried through, with an indomitable courage and endurance by a handful of Indian soldiers, inspired and commanded by a few British officers.

Chitral Fort of that day was square, 80 yards each way; the walls 25 feet high and 8 feet thick, built of sun-dried bricks and faced with mud plaster. At each corner of the fort was a flanking tower, standing about 20 feet higher than the wall. The river flows close by, and on its bank was a fifth tower, to guard the waterway.

The garrison consisted of six British officers, ninety-nine men of the 14th Sikhs of the Indian regular army, and 301 men of the Kashmir Infantry, troops belonging to the Maharajah of Kashmir. The British officers were Surgeon-Major G. Robertson, the British Agent; Captain Colin Campbell, Central India Horse; Captain C. V. F. Townshend, of the same regiment; Lieutenant Gurdon, Assistant to the British Agent; Lieutenant H. K. Harley, 14th Sikhs; and Surgeon-Captain Whitchurch. Another officer, Lieutenant Baird, had been killed the day before the siege commenced.

The garrison had full rations for forty-five days only, and their stock of ammunition consisted of the meagre amount of 300 rounds per rifle for the Sikhs, and 280 rounds per rifle for the Kashmiris. They had no artillery, nor happily had the enemy.

The fort had been built in the days when very short range firearms alone existed, and was then of some defensive value; but at this date its interior was completely commanded by rifle fire from the neighbouring heights, and it was quite impossible adequately to defilade the interior with the material available. So screens, made of canvas, carpets, and blankets, were hung on lines, so as to give shelter, at any rate from view. The most vulnerable part was the water tower on the river

bank, for if this were captured by the enemy, the water supply of the garrison would be cut off, and surrender inevitable. Several strong attempts were made to capture this tower, but the resource of the British officers, and the gallantry of the men, defeated all these efforts.

To show how closely the garrison was invested, it may be mentioned that the enemy had sapped up to within 175 yards of the water tower, and had established a fortified post at that range, across the river. They had also sapped in from the north-west till they had another fortified post only 80 yards from the covered waterway. On the south-east of the fort, the enemy gradually closed in, and occupied the summer house, only 40 yards from the walls, and erected yet another fortified post, only 40 yards from, and facing, the main gate.

On April 7 a determined attempt was made to capture the fort, considerable tactical skill being shown. A fierce attack was made from the north, threatening the waterway, and whilst the slender garrison was engaged in driving this off, a second attack was made on the gun tower, at the south-east corner of the fort, and an attempt made to burn it down. This attack was made with great bravery, the enemy carrying up huge faggots, and blocks of wood, and placing these against the tower, set fire to them. It was with the greatest difficulty that the garrison succeeded in putting out this fire, for no man dare show himself owing to the close commanding fire of covering parties of the enemy, perched in the trees. However, by using earth, and a little water, the fire, after five hours' strenuous exertion, was put out, and the attacks all round beaten off.

A further heavy attack was made on the waterway, on the night of April 11-12, but was beaten off by the steady volleys of the defenders. Four days later distinct sounds of tunnelling were heard, and it was judged that a mine was being run from the summer-house towards the gun tower, with a view to blowing it up. From the sounds it would seem that the mine shaft was now within 12 feet of the tower, therefore no time was to be lost.

A sortie was ordered, the officer selected to command it being Lieutenant H. K. Harley, of the 14th Sikhs, and with him were sent forty of his own men, and sixty of the Kashmir Infantry. At four o'clock in the afternoon, and therefore in

broad daylight, the gallant Harley and his men dashed out, to capture the mine head at the enemy's end ; for there was no time now to counter-mine. As they raced across the few intervening yards, Harley at their head, on each side of him was a man shot. Dashing into the summer-house they drove out about thirty men who were guarding it, and then, seizing the head of the mine, put to the bayonet thirty-five of the enemy working on it. Then putting the charges they had brought with them into the mine, blew it up, showing that it reached to within 10 feet of the gun tower.

Having completed his work, Harley and his men dashed back to the fort ; his casualties having been twenty-one all told. A very gallant exploit, all will acknowledge, yet when Harley was recommended for the Victoria Cross, it was refused, on the grounds that he was only executing the orders of his superiors.

Some people in high office had funny notions about the Victoria Cross, though where they got them from goodness only knows ; they are certainly not in the Victoria Cross Warrant. Thus if an officer, or man, neglecting his own duties, went fooling about trying to pick up wounded men, who, by the way were often much better left quiet, he was eligible for the Victoria Cross, and sometimes got it. But if an officer, in the discharge of his duty, performed an exceeding gallant act, he was ruled out, as was Harley.

Even as late as the Boer War, Lord Kitchener, or someone about him, made a rule that no one above the rank of captain was to be recommended for the Victoria Cross, and this rule was rigidly enforced.

Happily the Great War has altered all that, and the Victoria Cross goes to a brave man, whoever he is, and whatever he may do to earn it.

This sortie of Harley's was the final scene in the Defence of Chitral, for the very next day, threatened by Colonel Kelly from the north, and Sir Robert Low from the south, the besiegers, fearing the fate of him that falleth between the upper and the lower millstones, softly and silently disappeared. Thus when daylight came, only great emptiness was to be found in the circumvalling lines.

It was a fine defence, and it was a fine relief ; both did the very greatest credit to all concerned.

Sir George White, the Commander-in-Chief in India, paid this high tribute to the defence :

"The quite exemplary coolness, intrepidity, and energy exhibited by Captain Townshend, and the valour and endurance displayed by all ranks in the defence of the fort at Chitral, have added greatly to the prestige of the British arms, and will elicit the admiration of all who read this account of the gallant defence made by a small party of Her Majesty's forces, and combined with the troops of His Highness the Maharajah of Kashmir, against heavy odds when shut up in a fort in the heart of an enemy's country, many miles from succour and support."

When Sher Afzul and his force were captured, it was decided to send that General down to India, as a prisoner of war. Sir Bindon Blood sent for me one morning, and handed him over to my charge, with orders to take him to the rail head at Nowshera, and there hand him over to the civil authorities. We were to make a march each day from post to post down the line, and would find at each a camp pitched for us. The escort was to be of British infantry, with a few Indian cavalry for orderly work, and carrying messages.

Sher Afzul wore a high astrakan head-dress, shaped like a beehive and nearly as large ; a thick double-breasted Russian great-coat with brass buttons ; and a pair of high Russian boots. This was quite a suitable costume in the highlands of Central Asia and in the depths of winter, but seemed a little inappropriate as we gradually dropped down towards the plains of India in the hot weather. I could see the perspiration pouring down Sher Afzul's face, and thinking perhaps that he had no other kit, proposed to get him a cooler outfit at the next halting place.

This offer he rather abruptly refused, and as it was no business of mine, if it pleased him to be boiled alive, I let the matter drop. The secret of the great-coat was revealed later. As escort he had a company of the Seaforth Highlanders, and these good soldiers took no chances, never allowing their prisoner out of sight, by day or by night. Consequently one day Sher Afzul came to me, and complained that even when he retired for a necessary purpose, a soldier of the *ghâgra* (petticoat) regiment, with fixed bayonet, stood within lunging distance. He added that this was most embarrassing, and that he did not like it.

At the time it seemed to me rather curious, for Asiatics are not as a rule over-delicate in these matters, but seeing no harm in his request, as long as there was no chance of his making his escape, I asked the officer commanding the escort if he could make other, but equally safe, arrangements. This he did, by ordering the sentry close up to Sher Afzul to turn his back, whilst a second sentry was posted a short distance off on a flank, with his rifle loaded, and at the ready. Sher Afzul seemed perfectly pleased with this arrangement, and thanked me profusely. Again I was puzzled.

At length we reached rail head, and the mystery of the strange attachment for an exceedingly warm garment, in the most sultry weather, was revealed. When the civil police in India, and probably elsewhere, take over a prisoner, they make an exact inventory of all he has on his person, and in his possession. In the process of this examination he is naturally stripped, to make sure that nothing has been concealed. Sher Afzul strongly objected to this examination, and sent his servant panting to call in my aid. I went over and saw the police officer, but he said his orders were strict and definite on the subject, and he added with a smile—

“When a fellow makes all this fuss, you may bet there is something more at the bottom of it !”

And so there was. Concealed in his great-coat, and about his person, Sher Afzul had a large number of valuable stones, and in a belt round his waist gold coins and jewels, valued later at £20,000. His objection to the Seaforth Highlander sentry was not so much from delicacy, as from fear that he might discover the treasure. It was not because he liked being boiled that he wore always his great-coat, but because he was afraid to let it out of his sight.

Needless to say, his fears were groundless. He had never met British officers and soldiers before, and thought they were the same class of scallywags and looters he was accustomed to. His gold and jewels were taken from him by the police, and a receipt given him. Later, when he had reached his place of exile, a comfortable home in the Himalayas, all his goods were returned to him.

At Mundah the Guides captured, or rather found lying derelict, without any ostensible owner, a large and very heavy brass muzzle-loading cannon of considerable age. On

it was engraved a curious inscription in Persian, which reads :—

“ Its mouth is open wide to eat.
What shall I call it ? A gun or a serpent ?
This gun is most heavy, and makes victory certain.
There is none like it in India or Kabul.
Made by Ghulam Rasul.”

This gun the Guides decided to carry off, partly as a trophy of the campaign, and partly for its historic interest. Sir Robert Low readily gave his consent, but added that the means of transport must be found by the Guides. As there were no roads, and consequently no wheeled traffic, whilst the weight of the gun was manifestly against pack transport, the men of the Guides decided that they would carry it down themselves.

This accordingly they did, at the end of the campaign. It was a herculean task, carrying a gun of this size and weight along rough footpaths, and over hill and dale. The mode of procedure was this. At short intervals, along the length of the gun, strong rope slings were fastened. Through the loop of each sling was threaded a strong bamboo pole, at right angles to the bore of the gun, and projecting 3 feet or so on each side. Each company of the Guides Infantry volunteered to carry the gun by stages, and did it thuswise :

The first relief of twenty men handed their rifles to their comrades, who thus carried two rifles each, which they could hand back at once, in case of sudden attack. The carrying party then lined up along each side of the gun, opposite the bamboo poles. On the word “ One,” each man seized the pole. On the word “ Two,” all lifted together, and placed the poles on their shoulders. Then came the order “ Quick march,” and off they tottered, at a sort of half-run and half-walk, much affected by Indians when carrying a load.

When this first relief had had enough of it, they deposited the gun, and took a rest. Then the next relief in their turn shouldered the load and carried it as far as they could, and were then succeeded by the third relief. And so on, day after day, till the goal, which was Mardan, the headquarters of the Guides, was reached.

Here a beautiful garden is laid out, on Oriental lines, in which stands a memorial arch by the side of a sheet of water. This is the memorial which was set up by the British Govern-

ment, to commemorate the glorious defence by the Guides of the Kabul Residency in 1879. Close to the arch, and facing the entry to the garden, the great brass gun was placed on wheels made for it, and there it stands to this day.

Many years afterwards, a potentate of sorts wrote from the wilds of Asia, to say that he had heard that a gun bearing a certain inscription, was in possession of the Guides. The gun was his, he added, and ended with a somewhat abrupt request that it might be returned to him at once. The answer sent to him was polite, but at the same time perfectly firm, and to the point. The gun, it was remarked, had been taken as one of the legitimate spoils of war, and if the said potentate really wanted it, he might come down and retake it. The correspondence then ended.

Amongst the more junior officers who took part in this campaign was Lieutenant W. R. Robertson. He was attached to one of the brigades, as Intelligence Officer, and was rewarded with the Distinguished Service Order for his good work during the Relief. A few years before, Lieutenant W. R. Robertson had been a trooper in the 16th Lancers, and not very many years later, he became a Field-Marshal, and a Baronet. This was an astonishing and remarkable achievement, and sheds unbounded credit on the soldier who thus won through. In this case, the rise of Sir William Robertson from private to Field-Marshal, is all the more remarkable, in that it was not through influence, or outstanding bravery in the field, or even skill in the command of troops in action which earned this promotion. But unusual brain power, stern determination, and ceaseless hard work in the end gained him the Field-Marshal's baton. One might understand a private soldier, by sheer bravery, and constant employment in the field, rising to considerable rank, as did Sir Hector Macdonald. But Sir William Robertson was not fortunate in seeing much active service, during the crucial years; not nearly so fortunate as many others. He had therefore to carve his way by sheer brains and determination.

Having joined the ranks, with no great amount of education, he set himself the task of completing it, by passing through the Staff College. To do so requires, even from one who has been at a Public School, or the Varsity, or both, a very great intellectual strain. He must have brains and the will and power to work

exceedingly hard. Sir William Robertson, handicapped as he undoubtedly was, passed into and out of the Staff College with credit. A few years later, perhaps one of the highest compliments of his career was paid to him, when he was selected to be Commandant of that abode of high military thought and teaching.

That alone was an enormous achievement. From Private, 16th Lancers, to Commandant of the Staff College. But Sir William had by no means finished. He went higher and higher, and held post after post where brains and hard work were essential, till the Great War found him Chief of the General Staff to a British Army some 7,000,000 strong. It must have been a singular pleasure to His Majesty to bestow a Field-Marshal's bâton, and a Baronetcy, on the doughty soldier who had served his country so long and so well, and had risen to rank and fame under circumstances so remarkable, and indeed unique, in the history of the British Army.

Lieutenant W. R. Robertson's immediate senior in the Intelligence Branch of the Staff, during the Relief of Chitral, was Captain J. E. Nixon, of the 18th Bengal Lancers, known throughout his service as Johnny Nixon. Johnny Nixon had a very good bit of luck in this campaign. He was a Captain, and as a reward for his services, he was recommended for a Brevet-Majority. The *Gazette*, as is the way when dealing with Indian wars, took ages, some years anyway, before it came out. Meanwhile Johnny had become a substantive Major in ordinary course. So some lordly and generous person at Headquarters popped him up another step, and he was gazetted a Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel. But even here the snowball did not cease, for Johnny was appointed an A.Q.M.G., and that post carried with it the rank of full colonel. So, for his excellent work in a campaign, the active part of which lasted about three weeks, Johnny Nixon jumped from Captain to full Colonel.

He was a very brainy fellow, one of the cleverest in the Army, and it was he who during the Great War, as Sir John Nixon, conducted some remarkable operations in Mesopotamia, and won three or four signal victories, under circumstances of the greatest difficulty.

Sir John Nixon's bid for Baghdad, in the autumn of 1915, was a bold one, and quite in keeping with the wonderful

bids for victory which slender British forces, under bold Generals, have made, and generally with success, during past centuries in Asia.

My Division, the 7th (Meerut) Division, had been sent from France and Egypt to reinforce Sir John Nixon, and we met him on the Tigris as he was returning after the battle of Ctesiphon. His words made a particular impression on me. He said—

“ We have taken a bit of a knock this time. But, Lord bless my soul, if no one had ever taken risks, the cliffs of Dover would be the outer boundaries of the British Empire.”

He mentioned Plassey and other victories, won against enormous odds by sheer British pluck and determination. Johnny Nixon now sleeps in a quiet English grave ; and only missed being the hero of one of the greatest achievements of the war by a few hours, as will duly be set forth when we come to the Great War.

CHAPTER IX

POLO IN INDIA

POLO was still in its infancy when we joined, in 1878. There are several claimants to the honour of having first introduced the game into India, whence later it came to England. Many years ago I wrote a book entitled *Polo in India*, now long out of print, and took a good deal of trouble to settle this point. The conclusion then come to, giving chapter and verse, was that polo was introduced, or rather perhaps reintroduced, for it is a very ancient game, by George Stewart, then a young subaltern, alive still and now full Colonel of the Guides.

When polo was first played in the East is unknown, but anyway it is recorded that Cyrus the Great, who lived a good many centuries ago, played some such game on horseback, with a stick and a ball. It was not long after the Indian Mutiny, in 1862 I think, that George Stewart, who had been on duty in Manipur, across the North-East Frontier of India, and had there seen the game played, brought down polo sticks and balls to Calcutta. Here they were copied, and the game started in a more or less desultory manner. Taking his polo sticks and balls northwards, George Stewart showed them and explained the game to various regiments he met, amongst others to the 9th Lancers. It was that regiment which first took up the game seriously, and it was the 9th Lancers which introduced it into England in rather a curious manner. Having fought in the Indian Mutiny, and having served long years abroad, the regiment received orders for home, and on arrival were stationed at Aldershot. Here one Sunday afternoon, in 1871, if my memory serves me, some of the 10th Hussars were lunching with them, and to the 10th Hussars the 9th Lancers explained the new game.

The officers of the 10th Hussars were greatly struck with the idea, and proposed to have a game forthwith. True, there were no polo sticks, or balls, or ponies; but such slight draw-

backs do not stand in the way of the light-hearted British subaltern. Though there were no polo balls, there were billiard balls. In place of a polo stick, could anything be more suitable than a walking stick, or an umbrella with a crooked head? As for ponies, a pony is only a small horse, so why not use the real article and haul out their chargers?

Under these quaint conditions was the game of polo first played in England, on a Sunday afternoon at Aldershot, the sides being 9th Lancers *v.* 10th Hussars. No record of the game has been preserved, but without doubt some of those who played in it are still alive, and can give their account of it.

At first polo in India was played on very small ponies, the height limit being 13 hands in Upper India, and 12 hands 2 inches in Calcutta and Burmah. At the time of the Afghan War the height was 13 hands 2 inches, a little later raised to 13 hands 3 inches. At that it remained for some years, though there was a good deal of eye-wash about the matter.

The rule was that, before a tournament, all ponies should be paraded, and it was open to any player in one regiment to object to any ponies in another, on the ground of over-height. But as a matter of fact no one ever objected, for the simple reason that nearly every team contained ponies of doubtful measurement. No owner therefore was going to be so foolish as to commence throwing stones, living as he very possibly did in a glass house himself. It rather reminds one of the sale of Honours, in which both political parties are involved, so that neither can with impunity throw bricks at the other.

Then some optimistic fellow said—

“ Oh! this is all rot. Few of the ponies are less than 14 hands. Let’s acknowledge that. Make the height 14 hands and have done with it.”

His advice was taken, but the matter was by no means done with, for exactly the same elasticity began to appear amongst the 14 hands ponies. Some of these might actually be seen blushing and hanging their heads as they were led by. They probably felt like little girls kept in short frocks and socks, for fear of ageing their youthful mammas.

“ Oh! well, give them another inch.”

And they did.

Then came the Great War, in which the height of polo ponies

did not weigh very heavily. And since the war there seems to have been no height limit.

When polo was first played in India, it was a very cheap game. The little ponies could be picked up anywhere for a few rupees, and their feed and keep was not much higher than that of poultry in England at this day. Polo ponies, however, do not lay eggs at sixpence apiece. My first few ponies cost Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 each, say £4 to £5, at the then rate of exchange.

When going on my first furlough in 1883, my stud of three trained polo ponies fetched Rs. 120, Rs. 90 and Rs. 80, or in sterling, £12, £9 and £8. Five years later, in 1888, when leaving India for the Staff College, my ponies were sold at prices varying from Rs. 800 to Rs. 500. Eleven years later, that is in 1899, when polo had to be left for the Boer War, my ponies fetched round and about Rs. 1,000. When the Great War broke out my stud of ponies probably averaged in value Rs. 1,500 apiece ; but were perforce sold as remounts at Rs. 750 each.

All of which shows that polo is no longer a poor man's game in India ; indeed in these post-war days a first-class pony costs from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 5,000.

Talking of the price of polo ponies in India in ancient days, compared with present prices, it is interesting to remember that not so long ago as in the year of Our Lord 1881, the 10th Hussars, who were then stationed at Rawal Pindi, offered by and large, to all comers, Rs. 300, or say £30, for any pony brought to them by natives, which would make a decent polo pony.

This was thought, at the time, a desperately extravagant offer, which made the 10th Hussars temporarily unpopular with all poorer people, who were persuaded that half that price was the real market value of the very best amongst the small ponies then used for polo.

The ordinary impecunious subaltern would cast a knowing eye on a passing *ekka* pony, or on the mounts of stray natives on the roads. These he expected to buy, and generally did buy, for round and about Rs. 100, whilst for a real pearl he might rise to Rs. 150. But an open offer of Rs. 300 all round knocked the bottom out of that market, and impecunious subalterns, within a radius of 100 miles of Rawal Pindi, were seriously annoyed.

An illustration of the eagle eye of the subaltern officer for a likely pony, was afforded at Rawal Pindi, and within a few hundred yards of the 10th Hussars Mess. The said subaltern was one Rich of the Guides, who was doing a riding course, or something of that sort, at Rawal Pindi. One day Rich saw a comely English damsel on a grey pony, and enquired into the matter. He found that the comely damsel was the wife of a sergeant in the Commissariat Department. At a sergeants' dance later he happened to chance across the comely lady, and craved a dance or two with her. He was an admirable dancer, and a good-looking fellow to boot ; with the result that Rich bought the pony for Rs. 300 of the lady. This under the very eyes, so to speak, of the 10th Hussars. When Rich came back to the regiment, we thought that the eyes of the comely lady had been too much for him, to the tune of about Rs. 150. But we were quite wrong. Rich's grey was one of the best ponies we ever had, and played for the regiment in many a tournament. It was one of those few natural polo ponies which play like a book from the first, without any training at all.

One of the earlier matches was between the 9th Lancers and the Guides, at Kabul, during the Afghan War, 1878-80. A. G. Hammond, Harry Hughes, George Daly, and Robie Adams played for the Guides. Gough, Trower, Little and Cameron for the 9th Lancers.

Bloomfield Gough, "Bloomie" as he was called, was one of the great soldier family of Goughs, who have probably given more sons to the service of the sovereign than any other family. The great majority of the Goughs have been in the cavalry, which seemed to be the branch for which they were specially suited. I should not like to say how many Goughs have won the Victoria Cross, but certainly three to my knowledge. The Army would be richer for more families of the fine soldierly stamp of the Goughs.

M. O. Little, "Small Little" as he was always known, for he was about the height of Lord "Bobs," was an old school-fellow of mine. As small boys we had sat together in the same Form, 2B, Junior School, Clifton College. This Form was ruled over by Mr. Luckinan, a firm believer in the efficacy of the cane. Old Luckman (he was about thirty) was not a bad fellow, and I personally rather liked him, but Small Little

was constantly in his bad graces. Possibly no boy has ever been caned so frequently as Small Little: he never could be in the right. His crimes were so small as this—

“What are you doing, young Little?”

“Please, sir, nothing!” in pained astonishment.

“Then you ought to be. Come up here.” And Old Luckman brandished his cane.

Then began the usual comedy. Hot-water pipes ran round two sides of the Form Room (it was only a pen really in Big School), and the effort of every boy ordered up to be caned, was to arrive at the seat of judgment, with his hands well warmed, in the laudable desire to feel less acutely the cut of the cane.

Small Little, being generally near the bottom of the Form, was quite close to the master, but even then he was much too old a soldier to step two yards across and get it cold. On the contrary, he immediately started a crab-like progress, along the hot pipes, sitting on his hands all the way.

“Now then, young Little, come along,” said the master, gazing at the roof.

“Yes, sir, please, sir, I’m just coming,” from Small Little.

After several more reminders, addressed to the roof, Small Little would arrive at the seat of judgment with his hands as hot as pancakes.

But the comedy had not ended.

Smack went the cane, and from Small Little would come a stream of comment.

“Yes, sir. Please, sir. Not so hard, please, sir. That hurt fearfully. No more, please, sir!”

The matter of fact being that Small Little, being an expert, could so partially withdraw, and partially drop his hand, that the blow lost a good deal of its force.

However, Old Luckman was not hard-hearted, and Small Little would return to his place not much the worse for wear: though to be sure his hand was quite incapable of any scholastic effort, like writing, but was happily quite capable of playing a game of fives half an hour later.

It doesn’t much matter who won the polo match at Kabul, but my recollection is that the Guides did. Both sides were playing on grass-cutters’ ponies, that is the small baggage ponies used for bringing in the daily fresh-cut grass for the troop horses. The cavalry thus lived on the land, so to speak,

and not only saved the Supply and Transport people an enormous amount of trouble, but also saved the Government tens of thousands of rupees. This system of foraging has since been found impracticable with large bodies of cavalry and artillery, so that all are now fed by the Commissariat.

Of the Guides team, which played in this ancient and even historic polo match, Harry Hughes and George Daly were both killed not very long afterwards ; one in a steeplechase, and the other at polo. The other two, Hammond and Adams, both got the Victoria Cross. Not for defeating the 9th Lancers !

Harry Hughes, George Daly and Walter Hamilton, who had won the Victoria Cross, and been killed a few months earlier, were typical subalterns of the very best brand. Hughes and Daly were the most cheerful souls on earth ; always ready for a rag, always laughing and chaffing, always doing something, sport, work, games, tow-rowing ; but readiest of all for a fight. They were both great riders, polo players and sportsmen, with gun, rod or rifle, and both as brave in battle as the proverbial British subaltern. Hamilton, who was Hughes's greatest and closest friend, was quieter and more reserved. Other regiments thought he had " a bit of side on," as they called it. But they were quite wrong, he was just as good a fellow as Hughes or Daly, but he was rather shy and had not the same open way of showing it.

The 9th Lancers, not only at polo but at everything else, is one of the finest regiments the Army possesses. It is one of those regiments which always does well, whatever it is at, whether in peace or war. In no regiment does *esprit de corps* shine higher, or with more beneficial results. Fancy the bare idea of disbanding a regiment like that ! You might as well disband Westminster Abbey !

It was Ulick Browne, now Marquess of Sligo, who first taught the Indians to play polo. He was then Adjutant of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, and a very smart Adjutant too. The Adjutant, in all good regiments, not only trained the recruits in their martial duties, but taught them games and athletics, and other English sports. This was partly to develop them physically, and partly to imbue them, so to speak insensibly, with the spirit of the English Public School boy.

In furtherance of this idea, Ulick Browne put his men on to their grass-cutters' ponies, and taught them to play polo. They

took to it wonderfully well, so well indeed, that before very long he with three of his men made one of the best polo teams in India. They were mounted on tiny little ponies, but handy as cats, and the players, notably Hira Singh, developed a handiness with the stick, and an accuracy in hitting goals from apparently impossible positions, that quite revolutionised the game.

When Ulick Browne left the regiment his place was taken first by Howard Goad and then by "Shmiddoo" Smith. It was my privilege to umpire in the final of a tournament at Lahore, when this last team, still mounted on little rats of ponies, by sheer good play defeated a superbly mounted team. It was really a wonderful sight.

Hira Singh, who was a plain trooper, had been given his lance-duffadar's stripes in the regiment, *pour encourager les autres*, at polo. But the Maharajah of Patiala went one better, and attracted him across to his team, by making him a Colonel in the Patiala Army ! That was the beginning of the famous Patiala team. And that Patiala team was the forbear of all the famous teams, which the Rajahs of India have since put in the field. Thus it was that Ulick Browne's sporting little effort, for the improvement of his own soldiers, in the early eighties of the last century, first taught the Indians of the day to play polo. He may therefore truly be said to be the father of the magnificent teams which the Princes of India now put into the field.

My own experience is that there are very few born polo ponies, that is ponies that will go straight into a game, and play at once, as if to the manner born. No doubt in course of time, if first-class polo *playing* stallions, and first-class playing mares were mated, we should procure a strain of ponies which had inherited the polo instinct. Just as we have retrievers, pointers, foxhounds or greyhounds, each inheriting sporting attributes. But unfortunately male polo ponies are rarely kept entire, even in the East, for a very sufficient reason. The stallion is rarely dependable in the game, taken all the year round. He wants to fight, and kick, and bite, especially if mares in season are playing alongside. We can, by carefully selected breeding, get the right shape, and size, and balance, and through the mare perhaps a strain of polo genius. But a pony, however carefully bred, usually requires skilled and often prolonged training before it becomes a first-class polo pony.

Only two ponies came my way, during some forty years in India, which were born polo ponies, and went straight into a game, never requiring a day's training. These were a skewbald country-bred mare, which was named "Victory," and a chestnut Arab gelding, named "Mawdach." The skewbald mare came to me in rather a haphazard way, somewhat illustrative of the way one picked up ponies in India at that time.

Standing one day talking to an Indian officer, the same Subadar Samundar who appears elsewhere in these pages, outside the Guides Mess at Mardan, a wild-looking fellow was seen approaching from the direction of the Malakand Pass, mounted on a skewbald mare. She was piled high with blankets and saddle, and on top was perched the warrior. The way the mare walked struck us both. She had evidently come a long way, but was stepping out as bright and perky, as if she had not come a mile. The mare passed close to us, and her rider gave an off-hand salute as he went past. The mare viewed sideways, and from behind as she moved away, confirmed the good impression. Subadar Samundar was therefore sent sprinting after the wild man, and hailed him from afar.

"Oh ! father ! Hast in thy mind to sell thy mare ? "

"She is for sale. For that reason have I brought her. But her price is large."

"Say not so ! The mare is of inferior breed. And as for her colour, look at it. Is there any value in a mare which is not all of one colour ? Go to, I will, perchance, purchase her as a baggage pony."

"Go to hell thyself !" replied the wild warrior, with assumed ferocity. "I will not sell my mare as a baggage pony. But listen, brother, if the Sahib will buy the mare, and swear on the Koran to ride her himself, I will sell at a moderate price. Then I shall return with honour to my village, and shall say, 'My mare was of such excellence that an English Sahib, a warrior of the sword, bought her immediately, and rides her himself.' "

After a little more back chat and bargaining the mare changed hands for the modest sum of Rs. 120, say £12, and the Indian officer took off the wild warrior, that he might regale him with a *kabab* curry, and other luxuries, at my expense in the bazaar.

The fastest pony in the regiment, at the time, was a grey

country-bred belonging to Adams, which he at once promised to lend me for a trial. Raleigh Egerton, or someone of my weight, hopped on to Adams' grey, and I on to the skewbald mare. The trial was to be from the infantry recruits' parade ground, to the butts on the rifle range, crossing the polo ground ; a distance of about 400 yards. Before we had gone 50 yards it was evident, that the skewbald mare had the legs of the grey pony, and several times during the course she was pulled back to let the grey come up, and then raced away again.

This was good enough as far as pace went, and certainly she checked beautifully, and had a lovely mouth. This was at 2 p.m. Two hours later, just to try the mare, I took her into a game of polo. She played at once, and for ever afterwards, as if to the manner born. She had never seen a polo ball, or a polo stick, in her life before ; yet straight away played like a highly trained and seasoned pony.

She was named Victory on the spot, and played under me for years in all sorts and conditions of tournaments, and was then sold with great regret for Rs. 800, when I went home to the Staff College. Years after my return, whilst umpiring in the Inter-regimental Tournament in Umballa, who should I see turn up, blithe and sound and well, but old "Victory." She was six years old when bought from the wild warrior, and was now seventeen. A real good mare.

Mawdach, the only other born polo pony which fell to my lot in all those years, was a chestnut Arab. He was given to me by my wife as a wedding present, and was named after a little trout stream in North Wales, alongside which we had become engaged. Mawdach, like many Welsh names, is spelt with little regard to pronunciation, which in this case is "Mouthack." He came up from Bombay with a batch of Arab ponies, the average cost of these being Rs. 450, landed at regimental headquarters.

When a batch of ponies, say a truck-load of ten, was thus bought, the custom was for the officers in the syndicate to draw lots for choice of ponies. In this way "Mawdach" fell to Dew.¹ Dew tried him, but found him not up to his weight, and offered to pass him on to my wife, for the purposes of the aforementioned wedding present. Again before purchase we picked out the fastest pony in the regiment, which Fred Davies

¹ Now Sir Armin Dew, K.C.S.I., Chief Commissioner in Beluchistan.

rode. We took a split alongside which more than satisfied us of Mawdach's speed. Mouth excellent: turned like a top: A.I. And into our stable he went.

From that day forth Mawdach played like a book. He never had any training, he was a natural player, and loved the game. Like Victory, he watched the ball the whole time and never made a mistake, he hardly wanted reins and a bit. A real topper. The best pony I have ever had.

A little by-play, which we taught Mawdach, used to amuse people. We had a spaniel named Romp, a nice cheerful dog, like all spaniels. Him we taught, after a chukker, to come out into the middle of the ground and fetch Mawdach in. When Mawdach had also learnt the game, he might be seen standing all alone, in the middle of the polo ground, and gazing mildly around. Evidently saying to himself, also mildly—

"That dam dog Romp. Late again, and I want my carrot badly."

Then Romp, pretending he was frightfully sorry to be so late, might be seen racing out, with his ears flopping like flails.

"Sorry, old chap. Didn't see you had finished." Then taking the reins in his mouth with much pomp and circumstance, Romp would slowly lead the pony in. (Laughter and cheers.)

To work up a regimental team to winning form in tournaments is a matter which sometimes takes years. It certainly took us in the Guides many years before we found ourselves in the first flight. This was partly due to the isolated position of the Corps on the Frontier, and partly because, owing to the necessity for careful watching of that Frontier, it was difficult to get away much, so as to get practice by play against other teams. However, in the course of years these difficulties were overcome, and the polo teams of the Guides became some of the most successful in India.

We had some remarkably good players. Fred Davies, Carey, Buist, Hodson, and Hector Campbell, were all first class, and there were a dozen more who were fit to play in the best polo company. Fred Davies was one of the best No. 2's to be met with in three continents. It was not only that he was very quick and active with his stick on both sides of his pony, but, more important than all, he was a dead shot at goal. How

many goals he shot for the Guides is unrecorded, but on one occasion, in the final of a tournament, he hit eleven.

Lots of forwards play brilliantly during the game, but when it comes to hitting a goal they may or may not bring it off. Fred Davies made no mistake, he sent it plumb through, bang in the middle of the goal-posts. He probably gained this accuracy by constantly practising at hitting goals, with the goal-posts placed half the usual distance apart. Indeed we sometimes played practice games, before a tournament, with the goal-posts thus narrowed. It is not a bad scheme, for when the real day comes the goal-posts look like open gates, simply yawning for the polo ball.

C. W. Carey was a very brilliant and dashing "back." We had some trouble over Carey. He was originally in the 23rd Cavalry, the old 3rd Punjab Cavalry, and conceived an ambition to transfer himself to the Guides Cavalry. We were nothing loth, and in due course he was gazetted across. The Colonel of the 23rd Cavalry, however, did not like this at all, and became imbued with a bitter and abiding disapproval not only of Carey, but of the Guides, horse, foot and baggage. It was rather like the French after the 1870 war : they lived for revenge. So also did the Colonel of the 23rd Cavalry, and like the French, after long years he achieved it, when the 23rd Cavalry defeated the Guides Cavalry in the final of the Frontier Force Tournament. May his polo soul now rest in peace.

A. H. Buist was an extraordinarily good player, especially in what in India is called a 12-anna game. Here he was simply brilliant, but when it came to 16 annas he was not quite so good.

G. H. Hodson, later as a Brigadier-General, killed on the Gallipoli Peninsula, was an astonishing case of a man who could not ride, and yet was quite first class. A regular hard fighter right through, who would hit the most impossible goals, and then fall off his pony ! Out of the dust and scramble he would rise, roaring with laughter, mount, and as likely as not repeat the performance before the game was won.

It was really a sight for the Gods in one tournament, when we were playing the Patiala team, to see Hodson and the Maharajah of Patiala. Hodson was No. 3 on our side, and the Maharajah was No. 2 in his team ; so they were opposite

numbers, and it was Hodson's job to look after the Maharajah and see that he did not hit any goals. Hodson performed this duty with the greatest pertinacity and robustness. The Maharajah was, of course, superbly mounted, and Hodson just so so, but enough for the occasion. The Maharajah, who was a sportsman, was heard to declare that he had never had such a doing. He certainly hit no goals, and must have been black and blue from being constantly "ridden off" for an hour on end. All fair riding off, be it understood, or the umpires would have intervened. Hodson was in the Guides Infantry, and never got on a pony, except to play polo or to go on to an Infantry parade.

Hector Campbell, who is now commanding one of the battalions of the Guides, was another Infantry officer with an astonishingly good eye for a polo ball. He must have been in more winning teams than most people, but his greatest feat was winning the Championship Tournament at Calcutta, off his own bat so to speak. Near the end of the game his side was one goal down, and had to hit out from behind their own goal-line. From that hit out Hector Campbell made a run the clean length of the ground, and hit a goal. The game being again started, he immediately made another clean run, and hit another goal, thus winning the Tournament, and the Championship.

This feat of Hector Campbell's was equalled, and in one way surpassed, in another tournament. The Guides were playing the 3rd Sikhs, I think, in the final of the Frontier Force Tournament. There were only two minutes left to play, and the Guides were two goals to the bad. An absolutely impossible position, one would have thought. But it was not. The ball was thrown in by the umpire, and in three strokes, occupying only a few seconds, the Guides hit a goal. Again the ball was thrown in by the umpire and exactly the same thing happened again, occupying however a few more seconds. Both sides were now equal, and one minute left to play. By a sort of miracle, it seemed, the Guides hit another goal, three goals in two minutes, and won the tournament. Good grit that!

The first regiment in India, or anywhere, to start anything approaching scientific play at polo was the 9th Lancers. The usual game of polo, up to that epoch, had consisted of four pleasant fellows, mounted on small rats of ponies, playing a

game of ball against four other pleasant fellows, similarly mounted. If one of these pleasant fellows got the ball, it was, by courtesy, deemed to be his till he had done with it. Even if, in the course of a majestic run, he managed to make a miss hit, it was thought not quite good form not to give him a second chance. It was also thought extremely bad form to hit a goal, the opening for which had been worked up to by another player's majestic run. In my own youngest polo days, a Colonel, no less, was making one of these monumental runs, and hit the ball up to within 20 yards of the goal. As a member of his team I happened at that moment to be at the exact spot where the ball stopped, and, without thinking, popped it through the goal. Then the heavens opened! And I was treated to one of the severest tirades that has fallen to my lot, on or off parade. This was play of the most deplorable description, not to mention an act of insubordination, but worse than all it was Bad Form—with the largest B and F.

So also it was thought not quite nice to crook another player's stick, and he certainly cursed you freely if you did. To ride a man off was rarely considered proper, and if done at all was performed in a perfunctory and apologetic manner, which was usually quite ineffective. Yet both crooking sticks and riding off were permitted by the rules of polo, then as now. Probably at the back of players' minds were other games, such as cricket or racquets, where it would be highly improper to crook an opponent's bat or racquet, still more so to charge fiercely into him, just as he was going to hit the ball.

The 9th Lancers discovered that as the crooking of sticks, and riding off, were allowed by the rules of polo, it was evident that these means of attack and defence were not only legitimate, but meant to be used. But they made a still greater discovery, which was that a polo team should be organised, and that each member of it should have his allotted place, and allotted duties. Usually in those days the Back was the strong man of a team, and the most noted player; it was therefore decided to muzzle him as much as possible. For this purpose No. 1 was told off to ride the opposing Back, and make his life a burden to him; whilst No. 2 was thus given a much freer passage to hit goals. That really was the first development of team play, and was immediately successful, and as such was imitated by others.

Team play went on improving slowly for many years, but it was not till de Lisle, now Lieutenant-General Sir Beauvoir de Lisle, with his Durham Light Infantry team, came along, that a real stride in polo tactics was made. The Durham Light Infantry team, trained by de Lisle, is the team, first and last, that has appealed most to me personally. The team consisted of C. Luard at back, H. B. de Lisle No. 3, H. Wilkinson No. 2, and L. Ashburner No. 1, and they all had to be trained from the very A B C. Even in matters of riding, horse-mastership, and stable management, they were at a great disadvantage as compared to a cavalry regiment, or a battery of artillery. But de Lisle overcame all these difficulties ; he turned out good riders, and made them expert horse-masters, who knew also how to manage their stables.

As regards the game itself, de Lisle thought out and practised tactics, which revolutionised tournament polo. This not being a treatise on polo, it may be forgiven if details are passed over, but perhaps one concrete instance may be mentioned. The game hitherto had been straight up and down the ground, and the straighter the better, following out the 9th Lancers' principles.

It happened to be my duty, and pleasure, to umpire in the final of the Inter-Regimental, one year, between the 16th Lancers and the Durham Light Infantry. In working out one of de Lisle's tactical strokes, the Durhams would rush the ball down their left-hand goal-line till near the corner. The whole of the opposing team would naturally be engaged in stopping this rush. At the last moment one of the Durhams, probably No. 2, would prop and circle half left, hitting a back-hander under his pony's tail, up to the middle of the ground. There alone stood the Durham's back, with an open goal in front of him. Those interested in high-class polo cannot do better than read Sir Beauvoir de Lisle's own book on polo. There is no greater authority.

We in the Guides were perchance rather country cousins, as far as the higher thought in polo tactics went, for we lived alone on the remote Frontier, and were busy a good deal of the time in wrestling with truculent tribesmen. But we may perhaps be credited with one reform. Hitherto, by some curious conception, it had been considered to be an integral part of the game of polo to use the most appalling language, at the top

of one's voice, all through the game ; only slightly modified afterwards, when discussing incidents in the said game. In these post-war days it would be quite impossible to print the remarks then made at a roar, throughout a game of polo. Perhaps it will give a faint idea of the nuisance, if a little incident connected with the late Duchess of Connaught is given.

The Duke of Connaught was then commanding the Rawal Pindi Division, in the Punjab, and the Duchess of Connaught, who was a model General's wife, always took a pleasure in being present at all sporting events. H.R.H. was particularly fond of watching polo, but, as she somewhat wistfully remarked to a friend, she was driven from the field by the appalling language.

Whether it was before or after this incident, or whether there was any connection, the fact remains that the Guides, about this time, started the silent game. We did this partly on the grounds, that there seemed to be no particular reason why one should swear like a trooper at polo, any more than at cricket or football ; and partly because we noticed that the players who were most busy in cursing everybody else very often, whilst engaged in these verbal excursions, missed many opportunities themselves. Therefore in the Guides we made a law, more fixed than those of the Medes and Persians, that no player should speak a word during a game, with two exceptions. He might say "Leave it," and he might say "Take it" ; but these two brief sentences were the absolute limit.

The idea, helped by a few playful articles in the papers, caught on rapidly, so that a few years afterwards there was no decent polo team which did not run mute, on the Guides' pattern. Thus gradually every polo ground in India became a spot, where not only a Royal Duchess, but even a Billingsgate porter, might repair with confidence. Our reform regarding carrying back-chat off the ground was equally far-reaching. The rule we made was that the game, and all to do with it, ended on the touch-line, as we rode out. Previously it was quite a common occurrence for fierce wordy vendettas to be carried, not only off the ground, but to the Club and to the Mess, lasting, to the intense boredom of the majority, all through dinner, and sometimes on to the crack of dawn. The origin of such futile discussion perhaps being as to whether A had crossed B, or whether he had not. Whether C had crooked

D's stick on the wrong side of his pony or not. Whether E was off-side when he hit a goal, or whether he was not. And so on, *ad infinitum*. Which things did not matter a damn, and certainly were not worth while arguing about for hours. We found our two rules very good, and notice that they have worked their way all over the world.

The 10th Hussars were always a polo-playing regiment of the best class. A real good sporting regiment which took their ups and downs with great equanimity and fortitude. In the days we first met them, with Tommy Pitman running their team, they were at the stage when they were struggling to turn that last stiff corner, before they got into the straight. It was an excellent team, well mounted, and well captained, but, whilst getting near the goal, they just could not win. We had had the same experience for many years, and had a brotherly feeling for them. Then they came to England, still persevering ; the golden gates were opened and they were in, winning the Inter-Regimental at Hurlingham.

Many people think that success at polo is all a matter of money. That the richest regiment is bound to win, because it is in a position to buy all the best ponies. In a game where the pony is such an important factor, indeed some put it as high as two-thirds pony to one-third man, whilst first-class ponies in all countries are high priced, this would seem to be a sound conclusion. No doubt wealth is a very useful adjunct, but most of us can remember regimental teams which have worked to the top of the tree without wealth. Theirs the greater glory.

This result cannot be attained very quickly, indeed a term of years must be set aside for the effort. Raw ponies in all countries are comparatively cheap, and therefore to build up a poor man's team it is necessary to buy untrained ponies, and to train them up to the highest standard. This will take two or three years at least, whilst some ponies take even more years of training before they are at their best. Naturally every goose is not a swan, so that many ponies fall out by the way. They are not fast enough, not sound enough, not active enough ; ill-tempered, bad feeders, bad mouths—a dozen disabilities. These misfits have all to be weeded out and replaced.

But all the time we have also to think of our team of players, for a player to keep up his form cannot be relegated to playing

continually on half-trained ponies. The scheme therefore includes the possession of a certain number of ponies which are good and handy, though they may not be fast enough, or handy enough, for first-class polo. These give the players a chance of keeping up and improving their play. And so gradually the team, both men and ponies, is built up and at no great cost. Indeed if financial matters, such as the purchase and sale of ponies, are carefully regulated, it may be found, after a term of years, that no great cost has fallen on the regiment. Indeed some may even show a profit on the term.

In a game where it is acknowledged that the pony is so great a factor it seems strange that, outside regimental polo, there seems to be a complete laxity regarding the ownership, and even nationality, of a pony. In regimental polo a pony must belong absolutely, and bona-fide, to the regiment it plays for. But no such rule applies outside regimental polo. A pony may one day be a "Legbooter," and the next a "Wayfarer." He may even play for Oxford and Cambridge in one week. That however is all English, and in the family, so to speak.

But when it comes to International matches, and we find an English team beaten by a foreign team which has bought up all the best English ponies for the purpose, it seems fairly evident that the time has arrived when this matter should be regularised. In an International match it would seem correct, on purely sporting lines, that the ponies played should be certified to have been born and bred in the country for which they play. An English team would thus be barred from playing on Argentine or Californian or Spanish ponies, as much as a French or American team would be barred from playing on English, Irish or Australian ponies.

It is perhaps rather labouring the point *ad absurdum*, but in polo, where the pony is so high a factor, it should be no less a breach of internationality for English ponies to play against England, than for the English captain to announce, that he proposed playing against England for some foreign team. And, vulgarly speaking, the lid would be put on, if he added that, like the English pony, he had been put up to auction, and that the foreign team had made the highest bid, and had thus secured his services. Yet that is exactly what happens to the very best English ponies, and they being good decent folk, to their intense horror, I feel sure.

As the British public gradually get to know more about polo, and to take the same interest in it as they do in cricket, football, and tennis, these crude facts will be borne in on them, and an English pony will be no more allowed, by public opinion, to turn his coat, than an Englishman.

The more prominent tragedies in one's life are not to be forgotten easily. The greatest in my polo career occurred in the final of the Indian Cavalry Tournament. We had the tournament dead cold, so to speak, for we had defeated the favourites, the 9th Bengal Lancers, in the semi-finals, and in an off game had defeated the Durham Light Infantry, who were however playing without de Lisle.

In the final we were playing the 18th Bengal Lancers, a fine polo-playing regiment with an excellent team, but we had them, and felt we had. Then came a bolt or two from the blue. Two of our goals were disallowed, owing to a curious interpretation of the rules by one of the umpires. He acted perfectly justly according to his interpretation, but it was one which had never occurred to the framers of the rules, or to anyone else. Incidentally, as a result of this match, all ambiguity as regards that rule was removed by the Polo Association.

Even thus, and it hits a team badly if they get the notion that the umpires are up against them, we might have pulled it off, when the tragedy occurred. I was riding a top-hole Arab pony, named "Brigand," belonging to Raleigh Egerton, a fast handy pony, which could prop and turn like a top. The ball, hit by our opponents, was lying dead about 3 yards from the mouth of our goal. There was no one near me, and I cantered up to it to give an easy and clear backhander. I rode carelessly, and with a loose rein, and old "Brigand" whipped round just before, instead of just after, I had made my hit.

There was I, facing the wrong way, the ball 6 yards behind me, and "Kello" Chesney charging down on it at 60 miles an hour.

I might have chosen death to defeat and turned right across "Kello" Chesney; in which case I should certainly have been killed, and he also very probably. But we British, and soldiers more especially, play games for sport, and stick to the rules of the game, and these rules forbid crossing another player, within certain defined limits. Therefore neither I, nor "Kello," died on that occasion; but he hit the goal, and won the tournament. That miss-hit has always been between me and my sleep ever since.

CHAPTER X

HOW DEWEY TOOK MANILA

IT was a grievous disappointment not being able to take part in the somewhat extensive fighting, which broke out on the North-West Frontier of India in 1897. All the tribes were up, and upwards of 55,000 men had to be employed to suppress the rising. Swat and Buner, the Mohmands, Afridis and Orakzais, were all out on the war-path, the biggest conflagration that had taken place since the British border had reached its present limits.

After going through the Staff College I had to wait five years before being given a Staff appointment. Most unluckily this belated appointment came just a few months before the big tribal rising. Thus, at quite the wrong time, I found myself D.A.A.G. at Umballa, many hundreds of miles away from the battle area. Sir Bindon Blood, who was commanding one of the forces, very kindly wired and made personal application for me to be appointed to his Staff, but unhappily for me, my General at Umballa, Sir Penn Symons, and the A.A.G., Colonel Jimmy Babington, had already gone to the war, so I as the last joined member of the Staff had to stop behind.

It may seem curious that a Staff College officer should be kept waiting five years for an appointment on the Staff, whilst dozens of officers, with no Staff training, were appointed yearly. But those were the bad old days, when family or personal influence, was of far greater avail than a Staff College certificate. In my own case however, there was another reason, upon which one can now look back with amusement, though at the time I thought it somewhat hard luck.

Being rather at a loose end, and not finding regimental work enough to fill my time, I amused myself by working out "The Invasion of India, by a Russian Officer." This, when completed, I sent home to my father, thinking it might amuse him too. My father had friends at the India Office, to whom he showed the brochure, and one of these was so tickled with it,

that he lent it to Sir Henry Fowler, then Secretary of State for India.

Sir Henry Fowler was pleased to approve of the paper, and the matter therein contained, and either through him, or through some other officer at the India Office, Mr. Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, got to hear of it. My father was in due course asked if it might be published in the *Nineteenth Century*, and readily gave his consent. One of the rules then exacted by the *Nineteenth Century* was that all contributions must be signed by the author. So my little effort appeared as the "Invasion of India, by Captain G. J. Younghusband," which unfortunately completely destroyed the illusion aimed at, which was that a Russian officer was giving his views, as to how India should be invaded.

All this palaver had occupied the best part of a couple of years, and I personally had forgotten all about the article, and did not know that it was anywhere but in my father's waste-paper basket. Imagine my surprise then, whilst travelling in Japan, at receiving a portentous envelope, enclosing a very scorching letter, conveying the high displeasure of the Commander-in-Chief. The letter not only disapproved of my having written the article, but suggested that it had been compiled with the aid of highly confidential documents, which I had no right to use.

To say I was dumbfounded would put it but mildly. When I wrote the article, Lord Roberts was Commander-in-Chief, and I knew that it was of a nature and substance which had his approval. But to make sure that there was nothing in it that should not be mentioned outside the most exclusive strategic circles, I had, before sending it to my father, submitted it to Colonel McSwiney, who was head of the Russian section of the Intelligence Department. Colonel McSwiney made a few erasions, and at the end wrote, "This should certainly be published in the *United Service Institute Journal*, or elsewhere."

During the peregrinations of the article, however, Lord Roberts had ceased to be Commander-in-Chief, and had been succeeded by Sir George White. The article, which was really rather a rotten one, gained quite an unmerited notoriety. It was translated into French, German, Russian, and Italian,

and lots of newspapers, probably because it was the silly season, wrote reviews and criticisms of it.

Unhappily for me the Indian papers, being short of a job, also started in, and these caught the eye of Sir George White. He was perfectly furious about the article, and the notice that had been taken of it, hence the long envelope which reached me in Japan. Well, well, one can afford to laugh at it now. My only sources of information were the Indian Army List, Mr. Ross's book on Indian Railways, a map of Asia, any of which a Russian could buy for a few shillings, and a lively imagination. The penal result was that I was sent to wander, like Ishmael, for five years in the desert of the unemployed.

On return from the desert I was, as before mentioned, sent as D.A.A.G. to Umballa just as the frontier, on which I had sat all these years, was in a blaze, and every soldier naturally wanted to be in it. Not many months later however, the exigencies of the Service required that I should be translated to Army Headquarters, as A.Q.M.G. on Sir George White's own Staff! There, however, a bit of luck came my way to make up for the five lost years.

Apparently some economist at the India Office in London had decided, after the interchange of many hot and strong letters, that the A.Q.M.G. at Army Headquarters was a superfluous person, and should be abolished. The Indian Government had to bow temporarily to this decision, but set to work, with increased furore, to demonstrate the devastating effect on the efficiency of the Army, which this economy would ensure. During this further skirmish, I was given leave, there being no money to pay my salary, with the assurance of both the Commander-in-Chief and the Quartermaster-General that I should be reinstated as soon as they had defeated Whitehall with the pen.

It so happened, that at that particular moment, the Americans and the Spaniards agreed to differ over some matter connected with Cuba, if my memory serves me. Anyway, the bright idea struck me, that though I had missed the North-West Frontier War, it might be possible to get into a still bigger one. Sir Alfred Gaselee was then Quartermaster-General, and Sir Charles Nairne had become Commander-in-Chief, and both of these, when my request became known, were most sympathetic and helpful.

Thus it was that, fully armed with credentials, to be used in case some hasty fellow wished to hang or shoot me, we set forth. I say "we" advisedly, because my wife went with me, not so much to bind up my wounds, as to add a touch of artless tourist to the caravan. Moreover, my wife is very fond of travel and adventure. We were not officially credited to either of the belligerents, but had letters of credit to both, and were told to wander about, and see as much of the business as we could.

It was the campaign in the Philippine Islands, for which we were bound. From Calcutta we took a China-bound steamer, but got off at Singapore, and let her sail without us. At Singapore we put up at Raffles Hotel, and began to make quiet enquiries about a ship to take us on to the Philippines. Naturally none were running, and we were debating about going on to Batavia, or Hong Kong, and thence trying our luck, when in came a small Spanish ship from Barcelona. Meanwhile we had aroused some curiosity in Singapore, so that the head of the police came to visit us, but did not get much in exchange, except that I was a British officer on leave, and that the lady was my wife.

Next came an A.D.C. from Government House, with very kind enquiries after our health, from the Governor, Sir Frank Swettenham. He also offered the hospitality of Government House to us. But we thought it better to keep out of the limelight, and whilst thanking the Governor for his kindly thought, warmly shook the A.D.C. by the hand, with vague talk about Java and Sumatra, and our consuming desire to see these places.

Through a Spanish agent we got in touch with the Spanish ship, which manifestly had not come half-way round the world for the fun of the thing, or even to trade with Singapore. As we suspected, later to be turned to certainty, she was a blockade runner, destined for the Philippines. Some good friends arranged our passage, and smuggled us at the last moment unostentatiously on board, and we were just about to sail, when alarms and excursions were to be heard.

The American Consul apparently, had made formal protest to the British Government, on the ground that the ship was carrying arms, and ammunition, and other warlike comforts, to the Spaniards. I don't know what the etiquette of the

ocean is on these occasions, but the British Government acquiesced in the ship being searched for contraband of war. Down came an army of stevedores, or whatever they are called, and set to work systematically to unload the ship. And a nice sticky job it was, both for the stevedores, and for us who had to lie low, in the sweltering heat of a dock, on the equator.

So busy, however, was everybody with the cargo, and with what they hoped to find, that no one took much notice of us, and those who did chance to glance in our direction merely thought we were a couple of Spanish idiots, running into unnecessary trouble. After working night and day the ship was cleared, and then, as we thought, rather a cursory search was made for hidden treasure. Certain things, however, were found, though we were too tactful and retiring to make enquiries regarding their nature, and several large cases were carted away. Then the whole work of replacing the cargo was put in hand, and early one morning we heard the screw moving.

When we came up to a late breakfast, French fashion, which was served on deck, we found we were far out to sea. Naturally we were the only two misguided persons to be passengers, and the rest of the party consisted of the Spanish captain, and two or three officers of the ship, also Spaniards. They were all exceedingly nice and courteous to us, and we carried on quite a lively concourse in broken French, masticated English, with a backbone of Spanish, in the hotchpotch.

Thus we learned that we were bound for Iloilo, a place we had never heard of before, but which, by diligent search on the map, we found to be one of the southern islands in the Philippine group. Our voyage was quite uneventful, over perfectly smooth seas, and with no Stars and Stripes to disturb the serenity of the scene. The only really disturbing, or, as it proved, soporific influence on board, was the rich red wine of Barcelona, which was served at breakfast.

British officers who serve in the sultry climes of India, and thereabouts, are exceedingly temperate in their habits ; indeed, their golden rule is, never to drink anything stronger than tea, or soda water, till the sun goes down. The wassail from Barcelona was neither tea nor soda water, but exceedingly potent red wine, of which being thirsty, I drank a flagon or two that first day at breakfast.

After breakfast I lit a cigar, and the next clear event was somebody saying, "Tea is ready." And so it was, with a half-smoked cigar lying on the deck. For ever after the caution of the old soldier was exercised ; a little rich red wine and lots of water with it. The Spaniards mix these two liquids, inside their waistcoats, as we learnt from the captain.

Beside his plate were two glasses, one of which held the rich red wine, and the other plain water. He would, when the occasion arose, take one gulp of Barcelona, and then as if chasing down a pill, take a deep draught of water. One lives and learns.

After a few days we opened up, as seamen say, the Island of Iloilo, and as no one seemed to object, crept in to the harbour of the chief town, also named Iloilo, bravely flying the Spanish flag. After mutual compliments, as the easterns say, we parted with our Spanish captain, and went ashore. He must, I think, have given us a good character, for no one seemed very inquisitive about us, and we put up unquestioned, at a so-called hotel.

There were wars and rumours of wars in the place, and we heard of the desperate assaults on it which were imminent. We could however see no signs of the Americans, and eventually grew to understand that the peril was to come from the indigenous islanders, who, siding with the American cause, wished to push the Spaniards into the sea. This might have been interesting from a military spectator's point of view, but as it seemed to take a long time to develop, we thought we would try to push along to more active scenes.

With this intent I went to the Spanish Governor, and was received with much politeness. After compliments, I preferred my request, which was that as things seemed rather dull down at Iloilo, we might be allowed to proceed to Mindanao, where interesting events were happening. The Spanish Governor nearly threw a fit at this audacious proposal, indeed he became quite cross, so I cleared out. With me was an interpreter we had picked up, a sort of a mongrel, who spoke Spanish well, and English and Hindustani indifferently. This worthy did not seem in the least disturbed by the rebuff we had received. On the contrary, he took it merely as the first move in a well-known game.

The next move he assured me was to bribe the Governor !

It was now my turn to throw a fit, at such a scandalous suggestion. But the interpreter smiled placidly, and said—

“ Plenty easy. How much master give ? ”

Not for a moment believing that such a thing was possible, but out of curiosity, I asked the interpreter how much was required to bribe a Governor. He had the tariff pat apparently, and replied, “ Fifty dollars.”¹

It was not till we had been in the Philippines some weeks that we discovered that the interpreter not improbably spoke the truth. All Spanish officials were miserably underpaid, but were allowed to supplement their salaries by making what they could, how they could.

By a streak of luck, however, we had not, on this occasion, any call to spend fifty dollars on the Governor. Walking down the street we were accosted by a gentleman, who said he was British, and that his name was Duncan. He asked if he could be of any service to us. We took him back to the hotel, and had a long talk with him ; and who should he prove to be but a brother of Surgeon-Major Duncan, who was medical officer of the Guides !

Mr. Duncan, who knew the Spaniards and their ways, having had business connections in those parts for some years, at once advised us as to the line to take. He and I, arm in arm, so to speak, would again go and call on the Governor, and Mr. Duncan felt little doubt that this combined attack would secure our release from Iloilo. So, in due course, forth we fared, and again called on the Governor. What Mr. Duncan said to the Governor, or what the Governor said to Mr. Duncan, was hidden from me, not being an expert at the Spanish language. My part in the negotiations consisted merely of keeping on a fixed and ingratiating smile, which was intended to convey the impression that I thoroughly agreed with both parties.

Afterwards, Mr. Duncan told me that he had impressed on the Governor the matter of my exalted rank in the British Army (which, to be accurate, was Captain and Brevet-Major) ; that I was travelling about with my wife to enlarge our minds ; that I had the highest opinion of the Spanish nation in general, and of the Governor of Iloilo in particular ; and so on, and so forth. Then, coming down to the concrete cause of this second

¹ A dollar, Mexican, was then worth two shillings.

visit. Would it be possible for His Excellency to allow us to proceed northwards, perchance to Manila? His Excellency made a reply which, if literally translated, might read, "On their bloody heads be it." But as this meant "yes," we went away highly pleased.

Next Mr. Duncan discovered that a small coasting steamer would shortly sail for other islands of the group, and might if a chance occurred push on to Manila Bay. So we took the chance, and parted with much regret from our invaluable friend, Mr. Duncan.

The little cockle-boat we were on, which was about the size of the L.C.C. boats which used to run up and down the Thames, bravely put forth to sea with the Spanish flag flying conspicuously from the mast. But barely were we out of sight of Iloilo harbour, when we noticed that we had suddenly become British, and that even a larger Union Jack had replaced the red and yellow. The little vessel was absolutely packed with passengers, mostly Spanish women, who were taking no chances at Iloilo, and all were sea-sick. Indeed it was a high trial for the most hardened sailor.

I have no particular recollection of where we went and what we did, but, lying in a deck-chair one night, the word "Corregidor" was repeated several times, in the subdued converse of those strewn about us. My geography was definite enough to know that Corregidor is an island, which stands at the mouth of Manila Bay, and guards its entrance. By the dim light of the stars we could soon make out land on both sides, and creeping through a narrow strait found ourselves in a fine open land-locked sea, which proved to be Manila Bay, some 40 miles in extent either way.

Through this narrow strait had passed before the American squadron, under Admiral Dewey, and as our skipper rightly conjectured if the channel had been mined the American ships would have got the benefit of it, and that we were safe enough in their wake. However he took no risks, and felt his way very carefully. We afterwards learnt that there were shore batteries, both on the island of Corregidor and on the mainland. The fairway was only 600 yards wide, they told us, but neither of these batteries took any notice of us, or perchance, in the darkness, they did not see us.

When daylight came, as we steamed across the bay towards

Manila, away to our right could be seen the American squadron at anchor, whilst beyond it were the masts and funnels of ships, apparently sunk in shallow water. As indeed they were, for we afterwards discovered that this was the final setting of the naval battle off Cavité, in Manila Bay. This naval battle was fought between the American and the Spanish squadrons, and about it we heard first-hand from Admiral Dewey, on board the *Olympia* later.

With the Union Jack flaunting in the breeze, our little ship was most kindly received, and without any delay, beyond taking a pilot on board, steamed up to the wharf. As before mentioned, I am not learned in the ways of the sea, and have not a notion how our skipper explained his presence, the Union Jack, and other knotty points. A guard of American soldiers was put on board, doubtless whilst enquiries were being made, but these apparently did not apply to us, for directly we said we were British—not a doubt about it, we were at once put ashore, and the American soldiers most kindly helped to land our baggage.

Having been out of touch with current events for some weeks, we were a little puzzled with the strange conundrum which Manila seemed to present. Our little ship, with the Union Jack flying, came in without question or comment. American soldiers came on board to hold her. On shore the Customs seemed to be worked by Spaniards, with an American sentry here and there. In the streets were a certain number of American soldiers, wandering about in their shirt-sleeves; but most of the passers-by seemed to be Spaniards, half-castes, Chinamen, or Philippinos. The shops and hotels were all run by Spaniards, half-castes, or Philippinos. Entering the Cathedral, a regiment, or more, of Spanish soldiers were attending a church parade. Over the citadel waved the Stars and Stripes.

However, as no one seemed to object to our joining the gladsome throng, we made our way to a recommended hotel, and began to search for light. And this was the result. Dewey, having sunk the Spanish squadron at their anchorage, demanded the surrender of the citadel and town of Manila. The Spanish Governor, knowing that the citadel, a very ancient affair, could not stand the assault of modern guns, but anxious to save his face, made a very useful proposal, which, whilst avoid-

ing unnecessary bloodshed, might be acceptable to all parties.

The proposal was this. On a date to be settled, Admiral Dewey was to fiercely bombard an obsolete and unoccupied fort, some two miles from Manila. At the same time a regiment or so of American infantry, was to attack along the coast towards Manila, and fire a great number of rounds. At 11 a.m. precisely, the Spanish Governor was to hoist the white flag on the citadel, in token of surrender.

The "cease fire" was then to sound, and the American troops were to march into the citadel, the Spanish Governor would hand his sword with a sad but noble gesture to the conqueror, and then be at liberty to write home anything he liked, descriptive of the desperate resistance he had made.

This sounds like an extract out of one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, but it is exactly what Admiral Dewey himself told us, and the battle was fought on these very lines. We went out and saw the obsolete and unoccupied fort which had been bombarded. It is known generally as the Polverina or Powder Magazine, though no powder has been stored there for many years, and is the same old fort Malate which the British bombarded when they took Manila as far back as a century and a half ago. Clearly to be seen on its walls were the marks of the old British shells, whilst drilled right through were the American shell-holes of yesterday.

Admiral Dewey said he had one awful moment, when at 11 a.m. no white flag could be seen flying from the flagstaff on the citadel. Every glass was turned on it, and the American admiral thought the Spaniards had played false, and was just contemplating turning his guns, in earnest, on to the citadel, when a lynx-eyed officer discovered the white flag. Owing to the direction of the wind it was flying straight away from the flagship, and was hidden by its own white flagstaff. All's well that ends well. The battle was over, and Manila was captured without any casualties on either side, as far as we could gather.

There was a picket boat, which had come in from the American flagship, lying alongside the wharf, and as she was just starting back, and no one seemed to object, I got on board of her, and sat down amongst the men. After we had started a petty officer came round and remarked—

"Only officers allowed here."

So the men, American sailors and marines, got up, and

sauntered aft. I, being in mufti, and a supercargo so to speak, was following them, when the petty officer stopped me with—
“Britishers counts as officers.”

Indeed the British were very popular at that time with the Americans, for good and sufficient reasons, later explained by Admiral Dewey.

An engineer officer came and sat beside me and mentioned, with a very marked American accent, that he had been at school at Rugby! This interested me greatly, and I mentioned that I was a British officer on leave from India, and was going to leave a card on Admiral Dewey. The Rugby boy suddenly became quite English in his talk, and told me that he happened to be in Hong Kong when the American squadron was there, and they being very short of engineers, and he being an engineer at a loose end, and out for adventure, had put on an enormous American accent, and through the American Consul at Hong Kong, got drafted on to the *Olympia*.

The only question he asked me was, how many stars there were on the American flag. I had not a notion, but making a shot, said “Thirteen!”

He added that the American squadron was full of British, especially in the engine-room. These were probably the same class of sportsmen as were the Americans who right and left enlisted in our forces in the Great War, before the United States came in. They were out for a fight, like the warriors of old, under a friendly banner.

When we reached the *Olympia* my Rugby friend nipped up the gangway, and evidently told the officer on deck about me, for I was received with the greatest courtesy, and at once taken to Admiral Dewey's cabin. Quite a charming gentleman of the best sort, and most frank and engaging. Perhaps I ought not to use the word gentleman, because according to Richard Harding Davis, the American writer, with whom I travelled once, there are no gentlemen in America, they are all simply men.

Admiral Dewey's account of the sinking of the Spanish squadron was very direct and simple. When war broke out he was at Hong Kong, or thereabouts, and was terribly afraid that the Spanish squadron might give him the slip, and either fall on the transports bringing troops from America, or else escape, the other way round, to

Spain. Or the Spaniards might conceivably steam round Cape Horn, and join up with the Spanish squadron on the coast of Cuba. After anxious thought and careful search, he determined to risk Corregidor, and see if he could find his quarry in Manila Bay.

The channels, on each side of the island of Corregidor, could be very easily mined, and shore batteries could have made the entrance almost as impracticable as the Dardanelles. These risks, Admiral Dewey, with fine sailor-like spirit, decided to take, and as fortune favours the brave, it favoured him. The Spaniards had not mined the channels, probably because they had no effective mines, and the shore batteries refrained from firing, because, as later ascertained, they were afraid of being fired at in return ! This all was in the dark.

As the daylight strengthened, Admiral Dewey discovered the Spanish squadron at anchor over by Cavit , a few miles from Manila, and there and then sank it, without suffering any damage himself.

It was in converse with Admiral Dewey, confirmed later by talks with Theodore Roosevelt, that the inward meaning of the increase of the American Navy became revealed. The Germans and French, both of whom had squadrons in those waters, were neutrals, but hostile neutrals ; the Japanese were doubtful, but certainly not friendly. The other neutral present was the British, represented by one cruiser, H.M.S. *Immortalit *, under Sir Edward Chichester, but she was a friendly neutral. With that one British cruiser at his back, Admiral Dewey felt he had the whole British Fleet behind him, and his gratitude was warmly expressed.

Had the British been a hostile neutral, much more so if they had sided with Spain, expeditions such as those against the Philippines would not have been feasible for the American Fleet. This gave patriots like Theodore Roosevelt furiously to think, and this thinking became still more concentrated, when the menace of the new and powerful German Navy came into being. Roosevelt saw clearly, and said—

“ The only thing that prevents William from attacking America is the British Fleet, standing at his front door.”

No self-respecting nation, which claimed to be one of the great Powers, could continue thus to be beholden for its safety to a foreign Navy, albeit of the same blood, and speaking the

same language. The Americans, therefore, determined to be dependent no longer on the protection of the British Fleet, and set to work to build a Navy sufficient for their needs.

On shore, at Manila, it was rather puzzling to discover who was who, and what was what. Hostilities apparently had ceased between the Americans and the Spaniards ; but both of these had been fighting over another man's corpse, that of the Philippine Islanders. This corpse now suddenly arose, and said—

“ Well, and what about me ? ”

To add to the complication, if the Islands belonged to anyone, by right of conquest, they belonged to the British ! For the British had taken them a century or so before, but at the general settling up of affairs, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, had sold them to the Spaniards for a nominal sum, £3,000,000 or so. But the Spaniards had never settled this little account, nor have they to this day. Therefore it was open to the British to foreclose, and claim the return of the Islands. The British, however, let bygones be bygones, wiped off the debt, and made no claims.

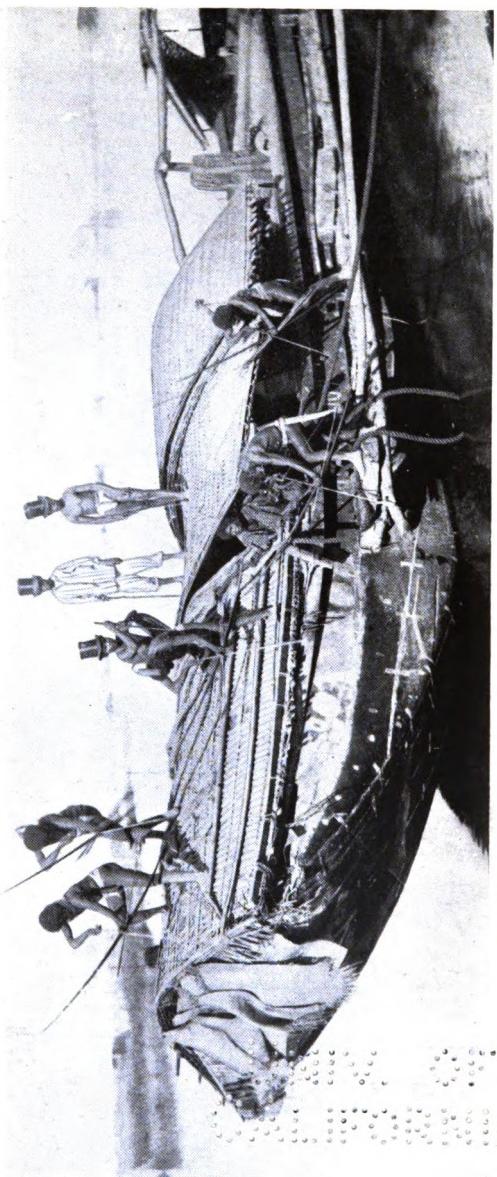
Curiously enough, the Philippinos were quite of another mind, they thought that the Americans had come to deliver them from the Spanish yoke, and to restore their country to the Islanders. Very possibly the Americans had set out with this intention, but on further consideration decided to retain the Islands. This greatly incensed the Philippinos. They said—

“ We objected to being under the Spaniards, we equally object to being under the Americans. If we are not to be independent, we prefer to be under the British.”

Thereupon, led by Aguinaldo, the Philippinos set to work to try and drive the Americans out. The Americans were quite unaccustomed to ventures such as this in the Philippines, and would have taken a very nasty knock, if they had been up against men of the sword, like the tribesmen on the North-West Frontier of India. But the Philippino is a very poor fighter, of small physique ; nevertheless, in his own country, he is a troublesome enemy of the mosquito type.

There were about 20,000 American troops at Manila, of whom some 2,000 were regulars. The remainder, though of a good stamp, were quite untrained, they could march in fours, and that was about all.

The regulars were excellent, and in discipline, training, and



THE AETAS, A TRIBE IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, WHOSE CHIEF GARMENT
IS AN OLD ENGLISH TOP HAT.

W. W. Webb
Architect

physique equal to the troops of any nation. The artillery were sadly handicapped, for they had come without horses, expecting to find these indigenous in the Philippines, whereas there are none. A long row of guns was therefore parked along one of the streets, and there remained immobile and useless. The officers of the regulars, highly trained, suffered only from one defect—*anno domini*. The Major of a battery would have about thirty-four years' service, and the age of the Brigadier commanding a brigade of infantry must have been at least sixty.

Manila at this time was by way of being besieged by the Philippinos, very mildly to be sure, but besieged. In the streets walked about American soldiers unarmed, Spaniards, Philippinos, Chinamen, and half-breeds, all on perfectly friendly terms. The shops were all open and doing normal trade, the hotels were full, the factories, especially the cigar factories, in full blast.

There were a few Englishmen, too, but I only met one, a banker. He and I concocted a scheme between us, which could only have been conceived as a wild romance anywhere else. In this war I had first been with the Spaniards, then gone over to the Americans, and now proposed going over to the Philippinos. My friend the Englishman knew the local language and ways of the country.

With this bright intent in view, we went and called on General Otis, who was commanding the American troops, and casually mentioned that, in pursuit of military experience, I should like to go over to the enemy. General Otis, to my relief, and perhaps surprise, raised no objection whatever. His exact words were—

“ Go right away if they'll let you.”

It was really rather nice, this complete confidence in the discretion of a British officer; for naturally I could not help being in possession of information, which would be of the greatest value to Aguinaldo. Nor, may I add, when I returned later to the Americans, did General Otis, or anyone else, directly or indirectly, try to extract any information from me regarding the Philippinos or their plans.

My English friend and I, therefore one morning wandered forth, hindered by none, and in due course arrived at Aguinaldo's headquarters, some 20 miles out. It was a small, clean village, most of the houses built on piles, to keep them out of

the quagmire of the rainy season. The village inn was quite a respectable affair, and far ahead of any native accommodation to be found in an Indian village. There was a table, and chairs, and a white table-cloth, knives and forks, plates and tea-cups. Imagine also our surprise at being served with Oxford sausages ! Perhaps one ought to have approached these with some caution, for they may have been lying in their tin for years, but as a matter of fact they were very good, and never gave us a qualm afterwards.

On us waited a good-looking damsel, evidently a cross between a Spaniard and a Philippino woman, indeed she proudly claimed a Spanish priest as her Pa ; with what truth, far be it from us to decide. At breakfast she had her hair done up Philippino fashion, in a knot of sorts. When we came back, some hours afterwards, for another meal, she waited on us with her hair combed out, and hanging down her back. Naturally one thought that the damsel had taken a morning off to wash her hair, and that not being quite dry, when duty again called her, she left it hanging out to dry. We learnt, however, that this was following the Chinese custom, which ordains that a woman shall hang her hair down during a certain period in the month.

With my English friend acting as interpreter, we obtained an audience with Aguinaldo. He was quite a young man, only 29, but evidently of considerable power, and force of character. He had for years stood up against the Spaniards, and was now equally opposed to the Americans. He talked very freely, and opened his heart. He said he had for years fought to deliver his people from the dominion of the Spaniards, and thought that the Americans had come in as his ally in this great project. But now he had learnt that it was merely to be a change of masters, the Americans for the Spaniards. His view was that the Americans knew nothing about governing Asiatic nations, however noble their aspirations, and that therefore under them the Philippinos might be in still worse plight than under the Spaniards. He added—

“ If we have to be under anyone, we prefer to be under the English. I have lived at Hong Kong and Singapore, and have seen how the English govern. They are a clean people, they take no bribes, they do not oppress the people, and there is justice in their courts for all. Moreover, they are a race of warriors, who rule the world.”

No arguments of mine, or of my English friend, could shift Aguinaldo from this view.

The Spaniards had undoubtedly transgressed two of the golden rules, in the keeping of which lies much of the success of the British, in dealing with yellow, black, or brown nations. These golden rules are : Firstly, never to interfere with the women of the country ; and secondly, never to interfere with the religion of the people. The Spaniards did both. They converted a very large proportion of the inhabitants, willy-nilly, into Roman Catholics, and they were very loose with the women ; the priests, according to the Philippinos, being the worst offenders. Consequently when the Spanish power was broken, signal revenge was taken on the Spanish priests, many of whom suffered horrible deaths.

The priest appeared to be a sort of parish bull, and it was no uncommon thing in walking down a village street to have two or three half-castes pointed out, with the remark—

“ That is a son (or daughter) of the priest.”

Possibly the Philippinos had not a very high standard of morality, but it was high enough to raise an objection to their wives and daughters being debauched by the Spaniards. In one village we came across five Spanish priests, imprisoned in a sort of cage, who were not allowed out of it for any purpose, and were fed through the bars, like pigs from a trough. We enquired why they were thus treated, and were informed that they were awaiting trial for offences against Philippino women. Some time after, we passed through the same village, and noticed the cage was empty. We asked what had become of the priests, and the man we asked answered nothing, but just drew his hand across his throat.

Whilst we were in Manila, a General Election was being held in America, and one of the political parties, or both, sent over accredited agents to take the votes of the 10th Pennsylvania Regiment. It was for the election of a member for Congress, I think, and the result of the voting was published in the Manila papers. A private in the regiment, or enlisted man as they call him, was easily head of the poll ; a few others received votes possibly derisive ; whilst the Colonel of the regiment appeared with a very substantial minority at the bottom. It is really rather difficult to understand that sort of thing. If it was meant as a joke, it seemed rather a poor

one ; and if it was meant as a demonstration against the commanding officer, it was to a regular soldier deplorable.

When we were staying with Theodore Roosevelt, not long afterwards, at Oyster Bay, he was very anxious to find out all about British experience in governing Asiatics. He had unbounded admiration, which he frequently expressed publicly, for the manner in which India was governed. He went so far as to say that it was the most wonderful achievement that lay to the credit of any nation.

The population of India is 350,000,000, more than three times the population of the United States of America ; and it was governed by 1,200 Englishmen who formed the Indian Civil Service, backed up by no more than 80,000 British troops scattered over a huge continent. This was the marvel which so impressed Theodore Roosevelt. He asked how it was done, and in my humble way I tried to explain.

In the first place, all English officials were given a substantial salary and a very good pension. This raised them above all danger of falling victims to the subtleties of Oriental bribery and corruption. Next, these English officials were drawn from the best stamp of Englishmen, Public School and University men, and selected by a very high standard of competitive examination. In India, their attitude to the natives was of the strictest justice and impartiality, mixed with a reserved and kindly cordiality—the patriarchal system, working under a Government which has been described as a benevolent despotism.

Mr. Roosevelt asked what salaries the Indian Civil Service received. When told, he replied—

“ Congress would never sanction such high salaries.”

To this, rejoinder was made that in the old days under the East India Company, when a junior civil servant, or writer as he was called, received only £5 a month, great abuses arose, and that the British experience was that to place officials above temptation they must be well paid.

When we were in Manila, an American official got the same pay there as if he were serving in the United States, and naturally he was not content with that ; and so, like the British a couple of centuries before, he looked for other means to fill his pockets. This fact rather impressed Mr. Roosevelt, and probably had its result.

The Spaniards, for some unknown reason, bestowed a medal

on me, on which is inscribed "A nos loyale voluntario," which being interpreted means, I believe, "To our loyal volunteer." This seems rather to imply that I had fought with great valour and loyalty for the Spaniards. Naturally, being only a neutral spectator, I had fought for none of the three sides in this triangular duel. But equally naturally, in return for the confidence placed in the discretion of a British officer, I was a deaf mute as regards the affairs and operations of each, when with the others. The gift of the medal was accompanied by a letter from the Spanish Governor which reached me in India many months after, and which has never yet been completely deciphered. But the decipherable portion was of a complimentary nature.

As the Spanish Government in the Philippines was by this time at an end, I sent a civil letter of thanks, through our Military Attaché at Madrid, and put the medal away, and forgot all about it. Some years afterwards, I was asked down for a week-end to Sandringham. As is the custom, when Royalty is present, we all wore our miniature medals at dinner, on our evening coats. On the last night of our stay, the visitors' book was brought out, and the guests were invited to write their names in it. As I, in my turn, was writing mine, King Edward was sitting in a chair to my left, within close range of my miniature medals. As I finished writing he said—

"Why have you not got on that Spanish medal?"

King Edward was really a wonderful man. Probably there were not more than three or four people in the world who knew I had that medal, but His Majesty was one of them. Taken much aback, I made some futile reply, such as—

"I am sorry, Sir, I did not know it was meant to be worn." To which the King replied, "I think it is a matter of international courtesy to wear a foreign war medal."

And then, in the most genial manner, he added—

"Of course, there is some damned red tape to be gone through at the War Office."

Naturally I took the hint, and on return to Town went to the War Office, and with becoming tact, omitting the red-tape part of the episode, asked what was to be done about it. The reply was—

"Mount the blessed thing at once, and never be seen without it again, or off goes your head!"

After diligent search the original medal was found, and mounted, as ordered ; but then came the question of the miniature medal, without which the show was incomplete. On consulting Mr. Spink, it appeared that a new die would have to be struck, and that the cost thereof would be sixteen guineas. This nearly caused me to swoon, my loyalty being great, but my purse slender.

But Mr. Spink was equal to the occasion. His was a sympathetic soul, and he knew that soldiers' pockets are not too deep. So he suggested that I should walk into the house of Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son, a few doors up Piccadilly, and there procure a Spanish silver coin of the size of a miniature medal, and of the right date. In fifteen minutes, and with the expenditure of only sixpence, this priceless coin was secured. Mr. Spink smiled benignly, and said—

" For 3s. 6d. I will now provide you with a miniature medal which will serve the purpose."

Mr. Spink was as good as his word, and his noble effort, which incidentally saved me £16 12s. 6d., still hangs undetected on my mess jacket.

We English, not many years ago, were accused of being perfect maniacs about baths and perpetual washing, but we were not always so. Our grandfathers and grandmothers rarely had a bath more than once a week, and then in rather a poor affair, known to the irreverent as a tosh can. Even in my days, at school, we never had a bath in the house, and the only chance of washing off superfluous dirt was in the common swimming-bath, where 600 other boys did the same.

It was really the soldier officer returning from India, where one daily bath at least is necessary, who taught his relations and friends in England to have a daily bath. Just as he brought back from India the now familiar pyjamas, worn by all men, and some women. Fifty years ago all men wore white nightshirts, though certainly not such enticing garments as we see in the advertisements in ladies' papers.

Having received the gospel from the East, Englishmen set about teaching other nations by example, the virtues of the daily bath. At first all foreign nations were sceptical, and inclined to look on the Englishman, and his bath, as a nuisance and a bore. But the seed sown gradually bore fruit, and many Continental nations, as well as the Americans, are just

as particular now, as are the English in this matter. The Spanish however in the Philippines, were an exception, though that is a tropical climate. On one Spanish ship we boarded, with a view to taking passage, there was only one bathroom, and that was filled with heavy baggage marked "Not wanted on voyage." As the ship was bound for Barcelona, and being old and slow counted on taking 30 days to get there, we thought the prospect not inviting enough, and cleared out.

In the hotel at Manila there was no such thing as a bath of any description, and we were invited to walk to the sea, which was about a mile off, if we wanted to clean ourselves. However, by a little subtlety, and some bribery and corruption, we obtained the promise of a bath in our rooms. This was a great day in the life of the hotel, and there was an air of subdued excitement, as if something important was going to happen. At the appointed hour, about 3 p.m. on a broiling hot day, every door and window was carefully and hermetically closed, for fear, we learnt, that I, the first victim, might catch my death of cold. Then, with much pomp and ceremony, a half-caste maid bore into the room a crockery pudding-bowl, six inches in diameter, and placed it exactly in the middle of the bedroom, which was a large one.

It looked very forlorn there, but was shortly reinforced by another maid, who carried triumphantly the coffee-pot we had last seen at breakfast, filled with hot water. With smiles of triumph and encouragement, the two maids now ostentatiously retired, but as was afterwards discovered, only as far as the passage, where through a chink they could see all the strange rites of an Englishman, and be ready to dash to his assistance, should his strength or nerve fail.

Anyone who has tried to have a bath in a pudding-dish will speedily understand that most of the water, in which by the way were many derelict tea leaves, was eventually spilled on the floor. As this was covered only with bamboo matting, no great harm seemed to be done. But almost immediately a fearful hullabaloo arose from the room below, and some terrible language, in Spanish, and by a lady, was evidently being used. Happily succour was at hand, for the two maids, instantly grasping, indeed having seen what had happened, dashed in without more ado, and simply shrieked at me, whilst they

mopped up the floor. Gracefully draped in a napkin, the local substitute for a bath towel, I silently vowed that never again would I attempt a Spanish bath.

The loud cries of the Spanish lady below were quite explainable, and even excusable. She was taking her siesta in chaste seclusion and semi-darkness, when warm water came drop by drop, and then in a trickle on to her, naturally causing her some alarm, and when alarmed the Latin races are somewhat vociferous. When she heard later the cause of this mild deluge, her remarks about the English nation in general, and British officers in particular, were of remarkable candour. But also, with the grace of the Latin nations, when later I was introduced to her, it was made to appear that in the course of many years she had longed to meet a British officer, and was beyond measure pleased at having now achieved her desire, even under the delicate circumstances above related.

The sanitary arrangements in a Spanish hotel in Manila were incredibly insanitary. The approach to the place of retirement was through the kitchen, which it closely adjoined. Inside this small adjacent room was a hole in the floor—and that was all. The Americans said that in some houses, which had been commandeered for the use of officers, nothing had been cleared away for several years, and apparently was never intended to be. Yet curiously enough, though this is a tropical country, the Spaniards appear to have suffered no inconvenience, or contracted any virulent diseases in consequence. One would have thought that typhoid and cholera would have stalked through the land.

Whilst we were still engaged, and viewing with no little interest and some amusement, this triangular war in the Philippines, a cipher message reached me from Simla, which was rather surprising. Being busy over one job, and not seeing any newspapers except local ones, we were quite out of touch with the affairs of the world at large. During this period, apparently Lord Kitchener had taken Khartoum, and simultaneously, a small French force under Major Marchand, moving from west to east, had arrived at Fashoda on the upper Nile, some hundreds of miles above Khartoum, and had there planted the French flag. The international situation, as between us and the French, was therefore in a highly

inflammatory condition, and little might bring about a war between the two countries.

My instructions were to hie me back to India, and it was suggested that a useful way of returning might be via Tonquin and Saigon, the two chief French ports in the East. The suggestion was quite admirable from a broad point of view, and emanating from an arm-chair in Simla ; but if war broke out in the meanwhile, for me it meant becoming a prisoner of war, for so long as the war might last. However, it was all in the day's work, and we picked up an Australian horse-boat, which shipped us across to Hong Kong. The horse attendants, larrikins I believe they are called in Australia, used language all day and all night which is the worst I have ever heard. Having lived, for upwards of five years, within a stone's throw of Billingsgate, perhaps this testimony may be of value.

From Hong Kong, in order to visit Tonquin and Saigon, it was necessary to use a French boat, one of the Messageries Maritime line. Naturally I went under my true name and designation, and made no secret of whence we came, and whither we were journeying. But things were very critical at the moment, between ourselves and the French, and Lord Salisbury had as a precaution ordered the British Fleet to be in readiness. Consequently we were not very welcome guests on board. Everyone was perfectly polite, though distant.

After we had put to sea, we learnt casually, for naturally we did not wish to appear too inquisitive, that the ship would not call in at Tonquin, naturally much to the annoyance of passengers for that port. We calculated however that the ship must put in to Saigon to learn the situation, before deliberately running her nose into a noose, for all coaling stations further westward were British.

Sure enough and in due course, we slowed down towards nightfall one evening, and after dark ran past the fortifications at the entrance, and anchored up the Saigon river, out of sight of them. There a pilot came on board and took us on up to the town of Saigon, 30 miles or so from the coast. We only heard afterwards that this was a most unusual procedure, the entry which is a tricky one, generally being made by daylight. Nor did it dawn on me that this precaution was for our special benefit, though naturally I was disappointed at having seen nothing of the fortifications. The French are much more care-

ful in these matters than we are. At Saigon, however, we were followed about in rather an obvious manner, and our driver evidently had his instructions as to where we were to go, and where not. Quite rightly too. However, these instructions did not preclude our visiting the cathedral, and there quite a good brain wave arrived. The cathedral had a very high spire, and it seemed not improbable that a good view could be obtained from the top.

A very obliging sexton, or whatever he is called in a Roman Catholic cathedral, when questioned, made no objection whatever, but he added—

“ You cannot get far up, because the ladder is broken.”

Placing a dollar quietly but firmly in his hand, I said that I would go up, anyway as far as the break. After reaching the first landing, which was in semi-darkness, there seemed to be no further way up, till getting accustomed to the gloom, a broken ladder, or rather wooden flight of steps, was espied. A good ten feet had been removed at the bottom end, whilst from a trap-door above hung six feet or so of remnant. Further progress seemed impossible, and I was on the point of retracing my steps, when the light fell on a rope hanging from the trap-door above.

Testing this with my full weight, and finding it strong and well secured, and being in those days young and active, it was not many moments before I had swarmed up the rope, and was through the trap-door. When the stairs were broken, a rope had been left, in case of necessity either military or ecclesiastical, but the ass who put it there forgot to tie it back, so that it would be invisible to all but the initiated.

After that all was plain sailing, and storey after storey were mounted, till one stood at a great elevation, with the whole town of Saigon, and its defences, laid out like a map before one. The curious may perchance find that map, in the archives at Simla, to this day.

Descending, and arrived back at the trap-door and the rope, there intervened a *mauvais quart d'heure*, as the sexton would have said, for I could not for the life of me see or feel the rope. This was an awful moment, with a bereaved wife below, our ship sailing away, and hordes of fierce French soldiers doubtless baying beneath. It is an exceedingly delicate job, hanging by one's hands over an abyss, and fishing about with one's legs,

for an invisible and possibly non-existent rope. Naturally I could not do it now for my life, and should not try, but youth and active habits pulled the scale ; so that, just as I was feeling a little tired, one foot caught the blessed rope.

The only casualty in this sanguinary affair, was my hat, which fell off and could nowhere be found. Another hat gone wrong as had a previous one at Bangkok. Perhaps centuries hence, archaeologists will wonder how an English hat, made by the eminent firm of A. J. White, came to be deposited high up in the steeple of the cathedral at Saigon. Before this discovery will pale the unearthing made by Lord Carnarvon of the funereal wardrobe of T—— something or other, in Upper Egypt.

On our journey down the Saigon river, it was so ordered that the ship should pass the forts guarding the entrance whilst the passengers were at lunch. Being somewhat anxious to see these forts, I remained on deck, but it was not to be. The head steward, though he had never done such a thing in his life before, came to me on deck, and said—

“ *Déjeuner est servi, M. le capitaine.*”

I said “ Righto,” in French, but sat tight in my deck-chair. A few minutes later the Purser came up, and said in good English—

“ With the Captain’s compliments, breakfast is now ready.”

He also had never done such a thing in his life as to herd a single passenger down to a single meal. Even a buffalo could see what was in their mind, so I jumped up with enormous alacrity, and followed him. But at the bottom of the companion ladder, casually remarking “ *Excusez-moi,*” I dived into the abode marked “ *Hommes.*”

This abode, as I had often remarked, had large portholes high out of the water, and was on the port side of the ship, which was the right side for me. I hope I was not in there for a very remarkably long period, but during it we passed quite close to the forts, and if any have doubts on the subject, the aforesaid Simla archives may settle the question.

And so to lunch, and a very good one too.

Eventually we reached Singapore, and thence on by an English ship to Calcutta, there to find that the war clouds had happily lifted, and that the French and English were friends again.

CHAPTER XI

WITH BROTHER BOER

HARDLY had we returned from our Spanish-American and French adventures, and were just settling down to a quiet winter at Umballa, when one morning a telegram arrived for the General, Sir Hector Macdonald. This telegram read—

“ You are appointed to command the Highland Brigade, vice General Wauchope, killed in action, and may take with you one officer.”

This was at the beginning of the Boer War, in 1899.

Sir Hector, after reading the telegram, turned to me and said—

“ Would you care to come ? ”

It is unnecessary to record my answer, and off I went to break up a happy home, and sell all my horses and polo ponies and worldly goods, for what they would fetch, and pack my kit.

The life of a soldier’s wife is indeed a hard one, and only those of the right stuff, and thank the Lord, Englishwomen are built that way, should attempt it. Amongst other chattels was young George, then rising three, now a captain in the 11th Hussars, who had already achieved a notable success in the matrimonial line. When we went to the Philippines we bestowed our house and stables, and all that therein was, and our staff of servants, on a rich widow, who was globe-trotting, on the understanding that she would look after young George, during the period of our absence.

To assist in this task, we left an ample and reliable English nurse, who had been with him from his birth upwards. The widow was passionately fond of children, and also incidentally not very coldly inclined towards a certain cavalry officer in that same station.

Amongst other things left for her use was a very smart buggy, with a very smart pony attached thereto, winners

of the "smartest turn-out" at the Horse Show. Driving this trap, with young George, a fat and cheerful infant, by her side, the widow was a great success.

One of the sights of Umballa, so that all the men at polo, or other sports, used to come up ostensibly to chuck young George under the chin, but really to talk to the young widow, under his chaperonage. Indeed, so guileful was this infant that he made special friends with the aforesaid cavalry officer, always insisting on going to see him tent-peg, or his squadron drilling, or going over the jumps. Thus, when we returned, we found the cavalry officer and the widow engaged, and young George wearing a fat and beatific smile, as much as to say, "Alone I did it! Bless you, my children."

Having sold off all our possessions, and I being on the point of departure for South Africa, and my wife and young George for England, a telegram, just received by Sir Hector Macdonald, was handed to me. It was quite laconic and certainly definite—

"Major Younghusband cannot be allowed to accompany you to South Africa."

This was a sad blow, but did a good turn to a friend of mine, that excellent fellow Watty Ross,¹ of the Durham Light Infantry, who was selected to go in my place.

Sir Hector departed, and we wearily tramped back to the hotel, after seeing him off. Then I got my new General to wire enquiring why Major Younghusband was not allowed to go to South Africa. The answer came—

"Major Younghusband holds a Staff appointment, and therefore by Indian Army Regulations, Vol. IX, para. 542, is not allowed to leave it."

To this, in the course of a few minutes, went back another telegram—

"Major Younghusband begs to resign his Staff appointment."

Not at all! The answer came back—

"By Indian Army Regulations, Vol. XII, para. 365, Major Younghusband is not allowed to resign his Staff appointment."

Defeated? By no means. The wires were getting red-hot, but before they fused, back went this telegram—

"Major Younghusband has had no furlough home for nine years, and now applies for one year's furlough due to him."

¹ Now Brig.-General Sir Walter Ross, of Cromarty, K.B.E., C.B.

That gave them something to think about, and meanwhile I sent private wires to the exact Staff Officer at each stage, the Division, the Army Corps, and Army Headquarters, who would have to deal with the matter. Happily all these three were good and intimate friends of mine, so that within twenty-four hours a reply came—

“Major Younghusband is granted one year’s furlough.”

At the same time I sent wires to my father, Sir Dighton Probyn, and other friends in England, asking them to procure for me a job in South Africa. For it seemed ridiculous that I should be kicking my heels about, doing nothing in England, when I might possibly be of use in South Africa.

Catching the mail-boat for England, off we went. Luckily I did not attempt to do a guy straight to South Africa, for several officers who did so were caught on landing, and sent straight back. At Port Said was a cablegram from my father—

“Come on sharp, appointment for you.”

So we hustled through and arrived on a wet, cold, Sunday night, at Charing Cross. We were there met by my father and sister, both wearing rather long faces. Said my father—

“We got you an appointment all right, but the Viceroy of India won’t let you take it.”

Having slept on that, and eaten an English breakfast, after nine years’ abstinence from that nourishing meal, I hailed a hansom and drove off to no less a place than Marlborough House. There the policeman at the gate, and a gatekeeper inside, and a detective-looking sort of person, politely enquired my business, but the magic name of Sir Dighton Probyn removed all obstacles.

Sir Dighton Probyn was an old brother officer of my father, and they were “Dighton” and “Plummy” to each other ; whilst to me, from boyhood upwards, Sir Dighton had always been a most kind friend. He had just breakfasted when this rude incursion arrived, but was by no means put out ; on the contrary, he threw himself heart and soul into my endeavour to go out, and get shot at again.

“Wait a minute,” he said. “I’ll go in, and see the Prince.”

The Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII, was Colonel of my regiment, the Guides ; indeed it was one of the first Indian regiments which had received that honour. Therefore

I imagine Sir Dighton Probyn mentioned that an officer of the Guides had come to his Colonel, to ask that he might be allowed to go to the fight in South Africa. H.R.H. was, as it fortunately happened, not only Colonel of the Guides, but also Colonel of the Imperial Yeomanry, at that moment being raised for service in South Africa. Sir Dighton also mentioned that it seemed a pity that an officer with some little war experience should spend his leave in England, when he was desirous of spending it trekking about after Boers.

The result of this converse was, that Sir Dighton was ordered to send a telegram to "Viceroy, India" in the following terms—

"H.R.H. the Prince of Wales desires that the services of Major Younghusband, who belongs to one of his regiments the Guides, may be transferred temporarily to another of his regiments, the Imperial Yeomanry."

"That is all that can be done here," added Sir Dighton.

"Now take a hansom round to the India Office, and ask to see Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State, and just say that you have a year's leave, and would like to make yourself useful in South Africa."

Bang went another hansom, and another half-crown! At the India Office the hall porter thought I must be a white Rajah at least, when I said I had come to see the Secretary of State, and in sheer panic showed me up to the office of his Private Secretary. The Private Secretary asked my business, and whether I had an appointment. No, I had no appointment; but he was a good fellow, and I told him my tale.

"Well, I'll see what can be done," he replied, with a friendly smile.

In two minutes I was in a chair, facing Lord George Hamilton, who was seated at a large desk. I preferred my request, in the terms Sir Dighton had suggested. Lord George Hamilton looked thoughtful, and then said—

"When did you come home?"

"Last night at nine o'clock, sir," I replied.

It did not seem much of a joke, but the Secretary of State seemed to enjoy it, and laughingly remarked—

"Well, you have not lost much time!"

Lord George Hamilton was kindness itself, and after asking whether I was sure I could be spared from the Guides, said that no obstacle would be placed in my way by him. But he added—

"Lord Roberts has applied for fifty cavalry officers by name, from India, and they have all been refused *en bloc*. Your name is not even amongst those fifty. However, I will do my best for you."

Home to lunch, and to report progress to my father. During lunch the maid came in, crimson with excitement. For in the hall stood a royal messenger, clad in a scarlet coat, wearing a top-hat, with a gold band, and gold brim.

He handed me a letter from Sir Dighton, and inside was the copy of a telegram from "Viceroy, India," which read—

"I agree, Curzon."

From what we learnt afterwards, Lord Curzon had his eyes on Russia, and thought that the Russians might take the opportunity, whilst the entire attention of the British was directed towards South Africa, to make a threatening advance towards India. He was therefore naturally reluctant to denude India of British officers.

The road being now clear, the next thing was to join my new corps, the Imperial Yeomanry, at that moment being formed. Here a wonderful piece of luck fell my way, for Lord Scarbrough,¹ who had been selected to command the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, in the most public-spirited manner, stood down, to allow me to take command, and came himself as Second-in-Command. This was a most noble action, the entire unselfishness of which will appeal to all soldiers.

My furlough in England lasted thirteen days, and then we sailed for South Africa, and were the first Imperial Yeomanry regiment to land. The people of Cape Town received us with great enthusiasm, and were enormously kind and hospitable. On the wharf were laid out long tables, covered with fruit and cakes, and every luxury for the men, whilst the ladies of Cape Town served behind. After making a short trek of a few miles to Maitland Camp, we found that another party of ladies had there prepared tea for all. These were most kind and gracious acts, and were most thoroughly and gratefully appreciated by both officers and men.

The Yeomen had little experience of picketing horses, especially on a loose sandy soil; nor were the English horses accustomed to head and heel ropes. We had therefore rather a hectic night, with loose horses careering wildly about; the

¹ Now Major-General the Earl of Scarbrough, K.C.B., K.B.E.

trouble being accentuated by a violent dust-storm, which came on in the middle of the turmoil. Dust-storms are damnable at the best, but must have been doubly so to the Yeomen of England, accustomed to the green and dustless fields of that pleasant land.

Before starting on our trek northwards, we were inspected by General Brabazon,¹ the good old "Bwab" of Kabul and Suakin days; one of the kindest men on earth, and always a great gentleman. One of the tests he gave us was for separate troops or squadrons to gallop to a kopje or ridge, there dismount and fire a round or two at a supposedly flying Boer commando. Then to mount as quickly as possible, and galloping to another kopje, repeat the manœuvre. "Bwab" noticed that one very short-legged yeoman had each time great difficulty in mounting again, and was always left behind.

"That man will be caught by the Boers, certain sure!" remarked "Bwab."

And so he was, in one of our first actions with De Wet, and was for many months a prisoner, trekking about, mostly on foot, at the tail of a wagon.

"Bwab," who was an old 10th Hussar, knew as do all cavalrymen, that you must get men and horses gradually fit, before you put them to great tests of endurance; that is if you want them to last. Therefore we were started off to trek up through Cape Colony by easy marches, thereby not only fulfilling an elementary duty, but also showing the towns and villages through which we passed the fine English Yeomen, and their fine English horses. But, unfortunately, the strategic development cut short our training, so that after a few marches we were railed up to Kimberley, then just taken by Lord French.

Here we joined Lord Methuen's Division, and our first action, though a small one, happened to attract a good deal of attention. Amongst the soldiers of fortune who had offered their services to the Boers was M. le Vicomte Villebois de Mareuil, a gallant Frenchman of the type familiar in Europe in the old knightly days. With him was a commando consisting largely of his compatriots. Having some military training, he pointed out to the Boer Generals the long lines of communications of the

¹ Major-General Sir John Brabazon, K.C.B., who died in September 1922.

British, and how easily these could be cut, if not permanently, yet to an embarrassing extent. He was accordingly authorised to attack the Cape Town-Kimberley line.

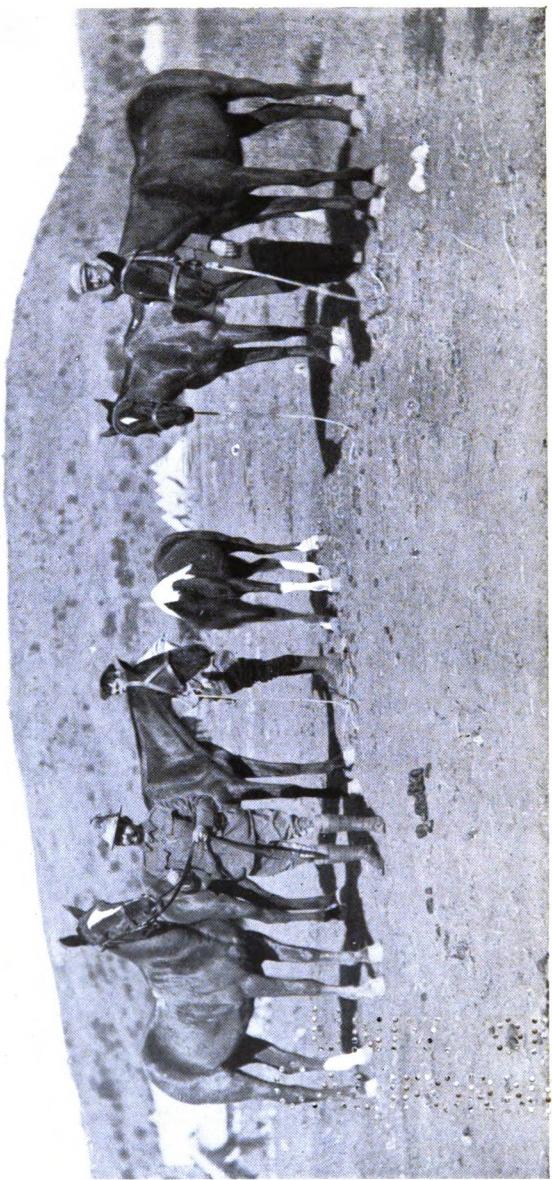
Lord Methuen received early information of this project. He also learnt one day, when we were halting at Boshof, near Kimberley, that the French commando was outspanned at a farm some 9 miles distant. Lord Methuen at once moved off with his mounted troops, amongst which was the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, attacked the commando and killed, wounded, or captured, the whole of it.

Unfortunately, amongst the killed was the gallant French commander. We, in the regiment, also suffered our first officer casualty, a brave and dashing young subaltern, A. C. Williams. Killed also was an old schoolfellow of mine, C. W. Boyle, who was always being held up to us at Clifton as the beau ideal of an English schoolboy. And so he was. A fine figure, very good-looking of the best English type, a great man in the Cricket XI, and equally great in the Football XV. Not only was he good at games, but also he was a scholar of no mean merit, high up in the Sixth Form, and good enough to gain an open scholarship at Oxford. On this day fell too Patrick Campbell, husband of the famous actress, who was a sergeant in the Yeomanry.

We were many months, or was it years, trekking about with Lord Methuen. Indeed, one officer, of a statistical turn of mind, calculated that we trekked 3,500 miles with him. During these treks we had many adventures and many fights ; and thus the regiment gradually dwindled down from 500 horsemen, to 150. It was very arduous work, for we made a double march every day, year in and year out.

This was the daily routine. About an hour before dawn little soft whistles were heard, blown by the squadron sergeant-majors. These served for *reveillé*, for no trumpets or bugles were used in the Boer War. In a great open rolling country like that a bugle or a trumpet could be heard for miles, and unnecessarily proclaimed to the Boers where we were, and what we were doing. In an hour the men had fed their horses, eaten their breakfasts, saddled up, loaded the wagons, and were ready to march.

At the first glimpse of dawn off we went, and marched till midday. Then we off-saddled, near water if possible, and



CHARGERS OF FIVE NATIONS—ENGLISH, ARGENTINE, CAPE, HUNGARIAN AND RUSSIAN—
HANDED OVER TO MY BROTHER LESLIE (ON LEFT).

One of my grooms, Bassett by name, afterwards won the V.C. in the Great War, and became a Lieutenant, R.E.

THE COUNCIL
OF THE STATE

turned the horses out to graze for a couple of hours or so. Then to saddle, and on the march again till evening. Sometimes the horses then got another brief graze, sometimes they did not. On red-letter days we might get a bit of a fight ; most days we did not. It became a perfect nightmare, that everlasting trekking, without as far as we could see any aim or object ; though assuredly there was one.

We had sometimes reliefs from the monotony, apart from fighting, which helped along, and one of these was concerned with two historic people. One day when we had a half holiday, that is to say, no trek in the afternoon, I had been out visiting the outlying pickets. On returning to our bivouac Beresford-Peirse, the Adjutant, met me and said that two civilians had come in and asked for me. Both seemed English and talked English all right ; one was a very tall, big fellow, and the other a little man, with glasses.

As we neared the mess cart, round which we used to feed and congregated, the big man and the small man became apparent. But they were really both big men, for one was Cecil Rhodes, and the other Rudyard Kipling. Rudyard Kipling and I had met in former years at Simla and Lahore, and his first greeting was rather characteristic. He used to wear double-decked glasses, the top deck for viewing distant objects, and the lower deck for objects nearer in. As Beresford-Peirse and I approached, he spotted us through the top deck, and when we got close, lifted and got us firm through the lower deck. These two views took his memory back, so that after shaking hands, his first words were—

“ Who was the third who lived in Kashmir House ? Young-husband, Maude, and——”

“ Woon,”¹ I said.

“ Yes, of course, Woon, I remember.”

When Rudyard Kipling was sub-editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore, my cousin, Romer Younghusband, Maude another civilian, and Woon a soldier, were chumming together in a bungalow in Lahore, named Kashmir House. That was the first chain my name suggested, and then the Guides, my permanent regiment, and so on, to this and that ; a very pleasant retrospect. Meanwhile Cecil Rhodes spoke not at all, just stood looking uncomfortable in badly-fitting clothes,

¹ Now Lieut.-General Sir John Woon, K.C.B.

and a cloth cap miles too small. Being hauled into the conversation, he gave briefly the cause of his visit.

" You have 500 English horses here. What did they cost you, landed at Cape Town ? "

We had bought these horses ourselves in England, Frank Greene, of the Treasurer's House, York, having, under Lord Scarbrough, been our remount officer. Government allowed us an average of £40 per horse, but Frank Greene got our 500 at an average cost of £35 apiece, for which I trust Government thanked him warmly. I calculated that they cost roughly £15 each extra to land in Cape Town. So, allowing for the losses on board, I answered—

" I should say, an average of £60 apiece."

" If you will let Mr. Collins, my stud groom, come down and make his selection, I will give you £120 for every mare, when the war is over."

I said that the horses were not mine, but I felt sure that the Government would entertain such an offer ; and added—

" When do you think the war will be over ? "

" Oh ! in a few months," replied Cecil Rhodes.

That was in February 1900. Two years afterwards we trekked through that same district. The war was not yet ended, and Cecil Rhodes was dead.

Sad to say also, none of our English horses remained, for double marches, with only rough grazing and short rations of corn, do not suit an English horse accustomed to stall feeding. Moreover, they had to carry from 18 to 20 stone.

It was always a great source of grief that horses did not get fairer treatment in South Africa. As every cavalry soldier knows, a horse must be gradually got fit and gradually trained, before he is put to hard and sustained work, if we want him to last. To put green horses, with 18 to 20 stone up, to do double marches continuously is, apart from the humanitarian question, simply asking for trouble.

Towards the end of the war one would have thought this lesson would have been learnt by the footiest person. Not so, for happening to be given command of a small column of about 500 men, straight off board ship, mounted on 500 green horses, mostly Argentines, we had evidence to the contrary. All this lot were quite good, horses and men, and only wanted to be got fit. From Cape Colony I wired up to Pretoria, for

everything was frightfully centralised, asking if we might do easy marches of 12 to 15 miles a day till the horses got fit. Back came an exceeding abrupt wire—

“ If you cannot do an average of 30 miles a day, you are no good.”

A very footy staff officer must have sent that wire !

But orders are orders, so we endeavoured to fulfil this bequest ; with the result that though we never worked up even approximately to the 30-mile minimum, we required 120 remounts at the end of the first week. Some of the horses had never carried a load in their lives, and simply lay down after a few miles with 20 stone up.

Naturally during the three years of the Boer War we had many adventures and many “ scraps,” as the soldier calls them. Scraps vary in size, from fair-sized battles to an affair of outposts or an attack on a convoy. Even quite large-sized battles, like those on the Somme in the Great War, may be heard alluded to as scraps. “ Were you down at the scrap on the Somme ? ” “ No, we were scrapping up Ypres way.” Our scraps in South Africa were very small affairs compared to those in the Great War, but the individual soldier is often in greater personal danger in a small scrap than in a great one.

After some weeks’ trekking in the Orange Free State, pursuing elusive Boer commandoes, we got an order to make a forced march to Kronstadt, where a train was waiting to take us to an unknown destination. We arrived at the station after dark, and at once set to work to entrain the horses, a difficult job for any troops in the dark, and more so for the Yeomen, who had little practice in entraining horses.

A Staff officer, whom none of us knew, was of enormous help to our men, and himself put a hand to the loading, which lasted some hours. He proved to be Prince Alexander of Teck, now Earl of Athlone. It was really exceedingly nice of him, for it was no part of his duties to help weary yeomen load horses in the middle of the night ; yet he worked as hard as any, and being expert at the job, his aid was invaluable. I hope we expressed our gratitude sufficiently, for we certainly felt it.

In due course off we puffed, and puffed for some miles, when the train came to a standstill on top of a rise. I was lying down in the guard’s van, and with him walked up the line to see what the trouble was ; for that part of the country was

stiff with roving bands of Boers, under the redoubtable De Wet. On arriving at the engine we were blandly informed by the engine-driver that he had forgotten to fill up with water before starting, and was now out of it, and that the engine could haul the train no further.

This looked extremely like treachery, and we were filled with all sorts of bloodthirsty thoughts, but the guard, who was an old English soldier, assured us that the engine-driver was perfectly straight and loyal, but manifestly an ass. After consultation we decided to unhook the engine, which had steam enough to move a short distance alone ; for her to take a dive down the incline before us, and with that impetus and her own exertions to reach Roodeval Station, which could not be far off, and there obtain water and return. Roodeval was a place of ill-omen, specially affected by De Wet. There he had captured a whole militia battalion on one occasion ; on another captured and burnt down the railway station ; on another destroyed the railway bridge over the Roodeval river. Indeed it was a lively spot, and De Wet knew every inch of the country round, for his own farm was not far off.

That was a desperately uncomfortable night, from a military point of view. The train standing high and conspicuous on the brow of the highest roll in the veldt thereabouts. The horses in boxes, standing high off the rails, from which it would be impossible to unload them, especially in the dark. A single line of railway, up or down which might come another train, not knowing we were stranded on the line. Impossible to use lights of any sort, for fear of giving away our position. And this all in the middle of one of the most dangerous areas at that period of the war. The night seemed endless, and yet we were not wildly desirous of daylight ; for the Boer, unless he was out for any special purpose, generally rested himself and his horse at night, but with daylight we stood revealed, and there might be a Boer laager within a few hundred yards, for all we knew.

There was no sign of our returning engine, and again we thought hard things about that engine-driver. Happily a railway staff officer, up or down the line, discovered that a train which had started from Kronstadt was missing, and set the wires going, and eventually discovered our dilemma. These enquiries were made "in clear," as was the case with a good

deal of the telegraph work in that war. Partly because of the great delay in ciphering and deciphering messages, and partly because officers who could cipher and decipher were not very numerous.

It came out afterwards that the Boers were tapping the wires not very far from where we were, and got to know as much about our predicament as did the British railway staff. However fortune favoured us, and succour in the shape of another engine reached us sooner than did brother Boer. He, incidentally, bumped into the redoubtable Colonel Bullock, of the Devons, not far from this spot.

Colonel Bullock, in the earlier part of the war, had been taken prisoner, after he had put up a hand-to-hand fight, during which he was knocked down and stunned. When Lord Roberts took Pretoria and rescued all British prisoners, there Colonel Bullock was amongst them. The released prisoners, who were from many different corps, were, as an immediate war measure, made into a battalion, placed under Colonel Bullock's command, and sent down to guard a section of the line of communications.

The Boers happened to collide with the small post in which Colonel Bullock happened to have his headquarters. The garrison consisted only of twenty men or so, and the Boers had a strongish commando, so they summoned Colonel Bullock to surrender. But Colonel Bullock was quite definite with the *parlementaire*. He said he had been taken prisoner once, through no fault of his own, and he was not going to be taken again. Only he put it in much stronger language. The Boers thereupon attacked, but found the nut much too hard to crack, and after suffering numerous casualties drew off.

It was a pity there were not more Colonel Bullocks in South Africa.

We escaped with only a sleepless night, but Lord Kitchener soon after, and near the same spot, escaped only in his pyjamas. In the course of our eternal treks we one night found ourselves again in laager, not far from Roodeval Station. On the same night a special train, which contained Lord Kitchener, who was then Chief of the Staff to Lord Roberts, and was on tour of inspection, drew up near the same spot. The country thereabouts was full of Boers, and it was not thought safe for the train to proceed at night, so it halted. The officer commanding

the troops suggested that the train should stand in, or by the side of the laager, so that it might have that protection. But Lord Kitchener, who was rather disinclined to brook suggestions unless they were very skilfully presented, rejected this offer.

The train, therefore, with its valuable burden, stood out by itself on the open line, about half a mile from the laager, guarded only by a small personal escort which travelled in the train. During the night a roving band of Boers, probably quite by accident, chanced across this isolated train. Luckily they had not the least notion who was in it, but it made a nice easy target, and so they set to work to riddle it with bullets, to the exceeding discomfort of those sleeping therein.

To lie down on the floor of a carriage, whilst it is being plastered with bullets, is neither a comfortable, dignified, nor a completely safe procedure. Moreover, if Lord Kitchener had fallen into the hands of the Boers at that particular juncture, it would have placed a very strong trump card in De Wet's hands. Therefore his Staff persuaded Lord Kitchener to vacate the train, and walk back along the line, in the darkness, to the neighbouring laager. This manœuvre was successfully executed, and the Boers having used up all the ammunition they wished to expend, also moved off. Little did they dream of the rich prize that had been within their grasp.

During one of our numberless scraps I made my first acquaintance with Lord Kitchener. He was then Chief of the Staff to Lord Roberts, and Lord Roberts found that he could be more useful in going about "gingering up," as the soldier calls it, than in the unaccustomed office of a Staff officer. De Wet had just captured the best part of a militia battalion, and was taking them off as prisoners of war. Lord Methuen, who was the knight-errant always sent to the rescue of distressed soldiers, was ordered to endeavour to rescue the lost legion.

In the process we bumped into a rocky ridge, strongly held by the Boers, evidently covering the retreat of De Wet and his prisoners. In front of this ridge lay a gently sloping valley, absolutely devoid of cover, and no place for infantry to attack across, without strong artillery support. My little lot, the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, much depleted in numbers, was that day escort to the guns. Seeing the infantry rather hung up,

Lord Methuen came over to where we were, and told us to mount and go off to see what could be done to get a move on. He meanwhile replaced us, as escort to the guns, with a company of infantry. We rode off, and coming to a kopje held by the Northamptons, I dismounted and went up to have a look round. The Major of the Northamptons in command pointed to a forbidding-looking ridge about 1,000 yards off, which he said was stiff with Boers. Evidently the way to get them out of it was the old familiar one of manœuvring round, in this case, their right flank, which appeared to be in the air. So off we trotted, but the moment we left the shelter of the kopje we got it hot and strong.

The whole Boer line blazed at us for all it was worth, guns and rifles, and though we were in open formation, it seemed that we must lose a good many men as we crossed the 1,000 yards of dead open country. But, as a curiosity, it may be mentioned that though we never went out of a trot, we lost only one man and one horse! This case has often been quoted in lectures on cavalry, showing how hard it is to hit a moving object at unknown ranges.

Thankfully we reached shelter, and there had the gratification of seeing from their right rear the Boer ponies knee-haltered, and a small avalanche of Boers running helter-skelter to mount and away. If we had only been cavalry we should have got into them nicely, but being mounted riflemen we had to clamber off and shoot. Just at this exciting moment Beresford-Peirse, who had been on a message, returned and said that on his way back he had been accosted by a strange General, "a big man with a red face," who sent an order that we were to go off and capture some derelict wagons, away to our left front.

As we were rather busy at the moment executing Lord Methuen's orders, I sent Beresford-Peirse back to find out who might be the large gentleman with the red face. In due course Beresford-Peirse returned to say, that from secret enquiries which he had made from the entourage of the large officer, he had ascertained that he was Lord Kitchener. It was rather a curious point, which had been raised on a much larger scale at Paardeburg—Can the Chief of the Staff assume the rôle of the Commander-in-Chief in his absence, and give orders over the head of the local commander? Personally

I thought not, and continued to carry out Lord Methuen's orders. This proved to be an unfortunate introduction to one who was later to be our Commander-in-Chief in India.

One day as we were trekking on one of our long and seemingly purposeless treks, a despatch-rider arrived from the nearest telegraph station, some 30 miles away, with a message saying that there was trouble down Lindley way, and that a Yeomanry regiment, just arrived from England, was in a tight corner. Lindley was 43 miles away from where we were, but Lord Methuen, with his customary energy and promptness, pushed off to the rescue. After some hard marching, on none too fresh horses, we arrived early in the morning near Lindley. Lord Chesham, who was our Brigadier, told me to push on with the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, and see what could be done, and disposed the 5th and 10th Imperial Yeomanry to support the push.

Trotting along in wide open formation, we came on the kopjes, near Lindley, which the beleaguered regiment was reported to be holding. These we found vacant, but noticed many empty cartridge cases lying about. We signalled back this news and pushed on round Lindley and beyond. Here we were brought up by artillery fire, and dismounting, made ourselves as inconspicuous as possible, whilst we reconnoitred. Discovering that there were only two guns, with an escort of riflemen, seemingly a rearguard, we pushed on into a very raviny and broken country.

This required caution, and after Dick Gascoigne had been left with a squadron on one flank and Scarbrough with another at another rather deadly place, the regiment had become somewhat small. At this particular moment we arrived at a cliff, a sheer drop of 100 feet or more, and saw before us the Boers trekking away for all they were worth. In the rear of their column were sixteen wagons and two guns, looking quite close in that clear atmosphere, but really a mile or so away.

One takes fences out hunting which in cold blood look impossible, or at best exceedingly forbidding, and the same applied to our precipice. But with the quarry so close, no one thought about it. First went Bertie Wilson, followed by Bertie Sheriffe and a dozen or more of their men. Beresford-Peirse and I scrambled down somehow with another couple of dozen

of the men. During this acrobatic feat we were nicely plastered against the walls of the precipice, and afforded lovely shots to the Boers below.

At the bottom we found a welcome ravine, in which we arranged and sorted ourselves. From here a gentle bare slope led for about 400 yards up to a kopje, held by the Boers. We decided to gallop them out of it, and hoped to cut off the wagons and guns at the same time. So out of the sheltering nullah we scrambled, and opening out fan shape, galloped up the slope. But brother Boer was not for it, and slipping off skilfully got behind another kopje further off. The two guns and the wagons, cut off, turned back and got down a side nullah, and we thought we had them there safe and sound.

At this moment a Yeoman came running from the direction of the Boers' retreat, and Beresford-Peirse galloping out fetched him in. He was a little incoherent, and perhaps naturally over-excited, but he said the Boers had captured the whole of his regiment, which proved to be a fact ; that he had slipped off one of the wagons which were conveying them away, and that they were only a few hundred yards off, over the next rise.

We had now only thirty-six men left with us, but our blood was up, and we were just going to make a dash for it, when a peremptory order arrived that we were to come back at once. Perhaps it was as well, for when we came to take stock we found we had few unwounded horses, and the sergeant-major's horse had fourteen holes in her ! Moreover, the horses had covered in one almost continuous trek 43 miles. The English mare carried the sergeant-major, a big heavy man, back to camp, gallant soul, but died that night.

As Beresford-Peirse and I were standing behind the wall of a ruined Kafir hut, whilst the men were getting to their horses, I asked him for a light for my cigarette. Not having a match handy, he held out his own cigarette for me to take a light from it. At that moment our two heads were not a foot apart. At that moment also a Boer drew a bead on our two heads. It was not a bad shot, quite good enough for us, for it just tipped the top of the wall and passed between our two noses.

In this running and thoroughly sporting fight we lost three

out of four of our squadron commanders : Rolleston, Starkey, and Dawson all being badly wounded, a good many men, mostly wounded, and seventy-two horses. Both Lord Methuen and Lord Chesham were very kind about it and came round and congratulated the men.

Rolleston¹ had rather a curious and romantic experience. His wife, Lady Maud Rolleston, got it firmly embedded in her head that Lancelot would be wounded, and that he would require her assistance. Thus inspired, Lady Maud travelled to South Africa, taking with her a trained nurse. But it was one thing to travel to South Africa—lots of ladies did that during the South African War, and reached their goal, which was the Mount Nelson Hotel at Cape Town, where they remained in joyance, or whatever it is called, whilst young officers on leave participated in the same—and quite another to get up amongst the fighting troops.

Lady Maud however brushed all difficulties aside, and making friends with the Principal Medical Officer, offered such help in the hospitals as appealed to the P.M.O.

Thus at the moment when Lancelot was sorely wounded at Lindley, Lady Maud and the trained nurse were in the path of duty at Kimberley, or thereabouts. Kimberley is distant from Lindley some hundreds of miles as the crow flies. But though crows might fly between these two places, to march across, even if escorted by 500 men, might take weeks, and no cross railways existed. Directly Lady Maud heard that her husband was wounded, she got leave, and working down the Cape Railway as far as De Aar, there got on to the main Bloemfontein-Pretoria line and successfully arrived at a small railway station, Kronstadt, I think, the nearest, but still some 30 miles from Lindley.

Here, the Lord only knows how, Lady Maud hired or bought a Cape cart and team, and with the nurse set out for Lindley. When she arrived there, whether it was in our hands or the Boers' I forget, for it was constantly changing hands, but I think the Boers had it then. Anyway they were always quite decent about our wounded, so that Lady Maud retrieved her sore wounded husband, packed him into the Cape cart and eventually brought him safely home to England.

Some time later, when we were all staying with Lord and

¹ Now Colonel Sir Lancelot Rolleston, K.C.B., D.S.O.

Lady Scarbrough, in Yorkshire, Rolleston being short of an arm and I short of a leg, both temporarily, a billiard match was arranged between us, to the great delight of the younger folk. Rolleston, though badly handicapped, won easily.

CHAPTER XII

HUNTING DE WET

ALOT of columns, hunting like a pack of hounds over a vast country, were working to drive De Wet, who was boring us all intensely, into a corner where he must surrender. The drive was a matter of 300 miles or so, and the impasse we were to drive him against was the Magaliesberg range of hills in the Transvaal. The drive went splendidly from south to north till we got De Wet to the Vaal River. Here we rather hoped to corner him, saving him and us the trouble of trekking further north to the Magaliesberg range. We very nearly did so, but he was a very slippery bird, and required a lot of salt on his tail.

The valley of the Vaal River is in parts very steep and rocky ; and the adjacent country broken up and difficult. Lord Methuen's column at this stage was moving along the northern bank, and in conjunction with Broadwood's or Little's column, I think, stopping the points of passage, which De Wet would try to use in crossing the river, if he came our way. Suddenly one of Warwick's scouts, who had been sent on to poke about, and try to get information from Kafirs, came galloping back *ventre à terre*. His report was that there was a large Boer laager hastily breaking up only a few miles ahead. Lord Methuen told our regiment to go off, and freeze on to the laager till the rest of his troops could come up. It was our day for screening duties, escort to the guns and odds and ends, so that only about a squadron remained to do the freezing.

Off we went merrily, and soon came in contact with Boer patrols, but taking no notice of these, we jogged on at a steady trot, and they fell back. Then we came to a nasty-looking kopje, just the sort the Boers frequented, and we felt sure it was stiff with them, though we could not see a soul.

The usual procedure on such occasions is to send troops round both flanks, and thus open the oyster, for brother Boer was as delicate about his rear as is our old friend the Turk.

At this inopportune moment we came across a stout barbed-wire fence running along the foot of the slope which led up to the kopje. But we had become fairly expert in getting through barbed-wire fences, and the wire cutters, who immediately galloped out when it was sighted, let us through with scarce a check. Just as well, for we were pretty close up by now.

Then, according to plan, out went the flank troops ; one round to the left of the kopje and the other round to the right. Meanwhile we in the centre slowed down to a walk, or little more. The troop to our left, under Doxat, a stockbroker in peace days, and who afterwards won the V.C., was evidently in trouble ; we could not quite make out why, but afterwards heard that it got bogged. The troop to our right, after making a circuit, charged the kopje in the most gallant manner, just like cavalry, though they had neither sword, nor lance, our armament being a rifle only, in slavish imitation of the Boers. We thought the kopje must be empty, when suddenly, when the troop was within a few yards of the summit, a fierce fire broke out.

It was silhouetted against the bright African sky to us, and suddenly the whole troop melted away like smoke before a sudden blast.

This being so, and that that, it behoved us to charge in too if we were to get on to De Wet and his laager. So up we went, a gentle slope, as hard as we could gallop. One's thoughts race quick on such occasions, and as we neared the summit the thought came to me that we should not be able to further our mission if we got it in the face at close range, as had our right troop. With this thought providentially occurred a slight dip, dead ground as it is called, not more than 50 yards from the crest of the kopje. The good old Yeomen were like a pack of hounds, all eyes on the master, so when I propped and held my hand full length in the air, the whole lot halted as one man. For this is the signal to " Halt."

The next signal, made with the right hand open and parallel with the ground, and then lowered and raised two or three times, denotes that the men are to dismount. To a man they were off their horses, as silently as in a movie show. To indicate that the men have not been dismounted in order to smoke cigarettes or feed their horses, the officer in command makes two cuts with his sword (or with his arm if he has not a sword

handy), one to the right and one to the left, followed by a thrust forward. This translated into words means, "At 'em, brave boys!"

In a few seconds we were over the crest, and saw Johnny Boer legging it for all he was worth. There were about eighty of them, we afterwards learned, and the tragedy of our right troop occurred on this wise. The Boers suddenly saw our left troop become entangled in the bog, and were so busy shooting at it that their attention was attracted all that way. Then suddenly they were assaulted by our right troop, and emptying their rifles at it at point-blank range, upped and offed it.

We were rather sick with a parson on this occasion. Never saw him before and never wish to see him again. I don't quite know how he got there, but he was wandering about amongst the dead and wounded and exclaiming, "Oh! my God. This is awful!" Anybody, parson or not, may go about saying that sort of thing on suitable occasions. But this was not one of them. The Yeoman, though brave as a lion when properly led, is a man of peace. We had a pretty stiff proposition before us, and it was not very helpful having a gent moaning about amongst the men like this. So I am afraid we were a bit short with that parson. Quite a different class to other parsons we have all met, Chaplains to the Forces, as brave as brave could be, and helpful in battle and after.

Always one impression has remained. As we breasted the crest, a Boer with a red beard, popped up from behind a stone wall about 10 yards to my right, and aimed his rifle not at me, but across me at someone on my left. An officer to my left, Beresford-Pearse or young Birkin, instantly turned his revolver on the red-bearded Boer. The revolver was a nickel-plated one, and the sun's flash on it caught the corner of my eye. The words that came from my mouth were, "Don't shoot the poor devil!" Rather a silly remark really, but it seemed such big odds, a squadron against one man. Someone away to the right, however, got the Boer through the head as I spoke.

From the captured kopje no sign of the disgruntled laager of De Wet could be seen, whilst in front of us lay a higher and still more fearsome-looking kopje. Leaving our horses in shelter, we dashed along a saddle-back, which led to the foot of the fearsome kopje, and then attacking its steep sides, drove

the Boers off it. Arrived at the top a most cheerful sight met our view, for in the valley below was a large Boer laager, breaking up in confusion. Everyone running about loading wagons, inspanning mules, saddling horses, harnessing ponies to Cape carts ; all in a very great hurry.

Taking stock for further adventures, I found we had exactly seven officers and seven men ! At the same time we were being plastered by some unpleasantly accurate gentry, shooting from our right rear. I wrote one or two notes therefore ; one to our rear squadrons to push our horses and themselves up, and one to Lord Chesham asking for every man and boy in the brigade to make a dash for it, and we would bag the lot. I gave these messages to a Yeoman to take back, and we kept his rifle and ammunition so that an officer might use them in his absence. We saw him half-way along the saddle-back and then he disappeared. Shot, no doubt, for there was a pretty tidy fire sweeping the saddle from two directions.

So I wrote two more notes, and we sent off another Yeoman with them, retaining his rifle and ammunition as before, for another officer to use in his absence. Again we saw our messenger enter the fatal zone, but after going a hundred yards or so, he like his predecessor sank. As the matter was exceedingly urgent, I then told Beresford-Peirse that he must go, and again the notes were re-written. Off went Beresford-Peirse, and with keen anxiety we saw him run the gauntlet and reach shelter. Naturally all this time De Wet was not wasting the precious moments. He had got his laager broken up and was on the move northwards, which was the direction he was wanted to go. He had not broken back anyway.

After waiting endless minutes, which seemed hours, and no signs of any movement from Beresford-Peirse or elsewhere, I thought it best to go back myself and see what was up. On the summit I left brave old Dick Gascoigne, Knowles, who had just been killed with a bullet through the head, Bertie Sheriffe and Bertie Wilson, who were always to the front in every fight, and five Yeomen. Crossing the saddle was not quite a pleasant job, for it was swept, as before mentioned, fore and aft so to speak, by gentlemen not accustomed to waste ammunition in fancy shooting. I did not run, partly because I hated running over loose rocks, and partly because I always

had a theory that you were just as likely to run into the bullet in front, as be picked up by the one behind.

Arriving in due course at the rear kopje, the one we had first taken, I there found the best part of two weak squadrons, dismounted and firing to right and left. Beresford-Peirse was all right, and had sent off the message to the brigade, but he at once explained that the cross-fire was so severe that the lead horses could not be shifted. Every time he had tried, and he made several endeavours, the horses immediately became a target, and losses drove them back to shelter again.

A hundred yards or so away to our left were two machine guns belonging to another regiment, behind a small wall, and at the moment silent. Beresford-Peirse and I therefore walked across to ask the officer to give us a hand in beating down the fire that prevented our getting our horses forward. The officer with the guns said—

“It is too hot.”

We thought he alluded to the Boer fire, whereas in reality he meant that his guns had got too hot to fire, and he was cooling them off. Being under this impression I was encouraging him to buck up and fear not, for the fire could not be very fierce if Beresford-Peirse and I could stand out in it. At that exact moment I got it fair and square, though curiously enough in quite a different place to what I thought. It felt exactly as if someone had given me a hard hack low down on the right shin ; at football one had often had one like it. I mentioned the subject to Beresford-Peirse, opining that a stone had been kicked up by a bullet and hit my shin. Beresford-Peirse opined differently.

“Well, sir, you may have been hit by a stone on the shin, but you are certainly bleeding like a pig in the thigh.”

So it was, therefore we decided to get under a bit of shelter and look into the matter. There we came across again our old friend the dead Boer with the red beard. Being now quite unable to move, it was necessary to hand on the rest of the battle to Dick Gascoigne. So Beresford-Peirse took down all my orders and issued them, and then went off in search of a medical officer.

Alone behind the ruined wall with the dead Boer, and smoking the inevitable pipe, up came cringing and creeping and whimpering a strange dog, thin and long coated, like many

a sheepdog in England. I was glad to see him and he seemed glad to see me, for evidently he hated battles intensely, and found a friend and a sheltering wall most comforting. So we sat and talked to each other, and had a bit of biscuit, and made great friends, which whiled away the time splendidly, till Lowndes, our own medical officer, came along. He deftly bound me up, and then went off to attend to a lot of our men strewn about the kopje and beyond.

My friend the sheepdog and I had a bit of a sleep, closely curled up together, broken some hours later by the rumble of wheels, and a voice saying—

“Here’s the Colonel !”

The Colonel was roused and put on a stretcher, but feeling the urgent need of a smoke sat up and began filling a pipe. Glancing up he saw Farrier Sergeant-Major Yorke, trying to take a snapshot of him. This woke the Colonel enough to wave the Farrier Sergeant-Major away with the words—

“Away, bird of bad omen !”

Not that Yorke was a bird, or bad, or even an omen, but he loved snapping of gruesome subjects. However, he got me all right, and the picture appeared at home.

In the ambulance with me were a lot of my men, and one caught my eye trying to reach a haversack which was hanging to a peg.

“What do you want ?” I asked.

“A bit of biscuit, sir, out of my haversack. Haven’t had anything to eat since last night, and I’m main hungry.”

“Where are you wounded ?”

“Through the stomach, the doctor said.”

Though no doctor, I had often heard that when wounded through the stomach it is generally fatal to eat anything. So I suggested—

“Never mind your biscuit. Here’s a cigarette. It’s best to keep quiet.”

The medical officer told us afterwards that the good Yeoman would have died to a certainty, if he had eaten that biscuit. He was empty at the time, happily, and remaining empty under orders, he recovered rapidly, and a few days after was walking about gingerly.

After many miles of rumbling and jolting the ambulance stopped, and voices said—

"Here we are!"

Morphia, or something they had given me, made me very drowsy, but I felt myself gently drawn out on a stretcher. Some fumbling and staggering, and then—

"We can't get him in, sir."

"Damn!" then a pause. "Take the window sash out, and push him in that way."

A long pause, and hammering. Then wide-awake, on a most comfy bed, and my faithful batman, Southwood, undressing me.

It was a Boer farm where we were to be left, for the battle had rolled far away, and in pursuit of De Wet it was impossible to carry trains of wounded.

So I and about a dozen Yeomen and one Boer, all badly wounded, were here deposited, with Captain Powell of the R.A.M.C. to look after us.

Lord Methuen, with his usual kindness of heart, rode back several miles in the night to see us and leave a cheering word; and so did Lord Chesham, Le Roy Lewis and Beresford-Peirse, before they again took up the hunt at crack of dawn.

Long afterwards we heard that the whole of this great and strenuous effort at the last moment failed in rather a curious way. The whole combination, carefully worked out as before mentioned, was for a line of mobile columns working over 300 miles of country, gradually to drive De Wet and his commando to the Vaal River. If he could be there intercepted and captured, well and good. But failing this he had either to break back, or flee further north towards the Magaliesberg range of hills. These hills were only passable for horsemen and wagons at a few points, and the vital essential to success was that these passes should be so held as to absolutely block the fugitive commando.

De Wet was so closely pressed that he could not break back, and trekked on, apparently to certain capture at the foot of the Magaliesberg range. Then one of the miracles which gave De Wet a charmed life occurred. The exact pass which he chose happened for the moment to be unoccupied, and Lord Methuen's column, which was the closest, had the exasperating experience of seeing De Wet calmly trek over and escape into the limitless north. Lord Roberts, who had planned the great drive, was naturally annoyed, but with great magnanimity forgave the offender.

That miss cost England millions of money and thousands of lives ; for De Wet, for nearly two years after, was the unquenchable fanatic who kept the Boers from making a perfectly honourable peace.

Whilst on De Wet perhaps it is allowable to mention another of the remarkable escapes which he had during the next two years. A British column, in hard pursuit of a Boer commando reputed to be led by De Wet, got into very close touch with it. The Intelligence Officer with the column had in his employ some Kafirs, who were useful in getting information from Kafir kraals, and also could sometimes wander unsuspected into Boer commandoes. One of these got hot on the trail and located De Wet one night in a farm, whilst his commando was outspanned some little distance away.

De Wet's own version of the affair was rather interesting. He said that, hard pressed by the British, his commando had outspanned for the night, and he himself, as his custom was, rode off and took shelter in a Boer farm a mile or two away. Just as he was going to bed, dog-tired, his own Kafir servant came in and said that another Kafir wanted to see him. This Kafir came in and preferred a request. He said that his own master was a "Handsupper," a bad man, who was going to surrender to the Roinecks. Therefore he was leaving the service of that Boer and would like to take on with the Baas. De Wet was very tired, and said to his servant—

"Take him away. I'll see him in the morning."

De Wet lay down, but could not sleep ; and then with a flash it occurred to him, that perhaps the strange Kafir was a spy, sent to locate him.

Jumping up he called for his Kafir servant, and asked where the strange Kafir was. His servant said that the other Kafir had laid down beside him to sleep, but when the Baas woke him he had disappeared. This was enough for De Wet. He at once ordered his horse, rode over to his commando, and gave the order to inspan and trek.

At dawn that morning the farm where De Wet should have slept was silently surrounded by the British, and rushed without a shot or sound. But the bird had flown. De Wet had again escaped.

But to return to our own little adventure. With the departure of our columns the curtain descended on us who were

Mrs. Albrecht had told him a piteous tale. How she had put up, fed, and nourished me and my wounded comrades for more than a month, how we had eaten her out of house and home, and quite ruined her, and how we had departed without paying her a farthing ! I gave Alfred Edwards the true story, and hope he let Mrs. Albrecht have it, both ways.

The same Boer, who had earned his fiver for taking the note, guided us into Vereenigen, on the promise of a further guerdon. We did not see a soul during our two days' march, and it was an exceedingly happy moment when we found ourselves in nice clean hospital beds, with assuredly the most beautiful angels on earth to look after us. A little tray, with bread and butter and tea on it, carried in by one of the angels, was one of the most enchanting things I have ever experienced.

The Boer who had guided us in was allowed into the hospital to prefer a request. His story was that Lord Methuen's column, in its drive north, had carried off with it some 500 of his sheep. Would I, in return for the services rendered, give him a note asking that they might be returned ? The Boer had done us rather a signal service, and we were duly grateful. So I wrote his story on the leaf of a notebook, stated the services he had rendered us, but took care to add—

“ If on examination this proves to be true, perhaps as an act of grace, and in return for the services he has rendered, some compensation might be granted him.”

Eighteen months afterwards, near the end of the war, whilst chasing rebels in Cape Colony, an official letter reached me from Pretoria. It stated that a Boer named — had on my recommendation been paid the full price for 5,000 sheep driven off by Lord Methuen's column, and would I kindly sign the attached expense voucher ? (or whatever it was called). I immediately wrote in great indignation, refusing to do so, and reiterating the note I had originally written. From that day to this I have heard no more of the subject. That slim Boer had turned my 500 into 5,000, and got spot cash for 5,000 sheep, apparently without any enquiry at all, or certainly a very superficial one. How he must have blessed the British !

Five thousand sheep seems a large number, but on one occasion we captured 13,000 in one *cache*. It was pure luck, for we chanced across them whilst trekking on some other

mission, up Heilbron way. Looking at them someone remarked—

“There must be a thousand or more of them.”

He was laughed to scorn, the general opinion being that there were only several hundreds. With us, at that time, were Lovat's Scouts, amongst whom were born and bred Highland shepherds. So we asked one of these how many sheep he thought there were in the flock.

“There must be nigh on 13,000,” he answered.

The flock was driven through a gap in a fence, by the Army Service Corps officials, and carefully counted, and the result was announced “13,000 or thereabouts.” These sheep were worth from £2 10s. to £3 apiece, or from £33,000 to £39,000 for the lot. The good old Yeoman thought that a bit of this fortune ought to have come his way, in the form of prize money, but that is not our way, and quite rightly. For once private gain, in other words loot and looting, is recognised, good-bye to discipline, and good-bye to fighting.

The Boer War in its later stages furnished a useful example. For some good reason, known to Headquarters, or probably suggested by interested persons, certain scallywags, masquerading under various Colonial Corps cognomens, were authorised to spend their time cattle-hunting, the proceeds of these chases being brought in and sold at war prices to the British Commissariat, the cash value being paid direct to the aforesaid scallywags.

The idea put before the military authorities was that they would in this way denude the country of cattle, thus helping to starve the Boers into submission, at the same time helping to feed the British Army on prime beef and mutton. It was a fascinating idea, but in practice worked out like this. The scallywag, through Kafirs or somehow, got in touch with those Boers who had flocks and herds concealed, and made them a business proposal. He would say—

“You have 1,000 sheep, which may at any moment be captured by the Roinecks, and you then lose the lot. Now you keep a few, or as many as you want for food, and sell me the rest at say £2 a piece.”

After the usual bargaining the deal would be completed, and our scallywag friends would bring them in, and sell them to the Commissariat for say £3 apiece. Nor did they forget to

recount blood-curdling tales of the fierce and sanguinary battles they had fought in capturing the sheep. Cattle were procured in the same way, and were a still more lucrative catch, being worth £15 to £20 a head. The curious thing was that we soldiers rarely got the sight of fresh meat, in spite of these captures. It was bully, bully, bully beef all the time. My recollection is that fresh meat rations came our way only about three times during the Boer War, except when a soldier happened to be in hospital.

Amongst the rude soldiery the idea was prevalent that these beeves and sheep were never meant to be eaten. The scallywags brought them in and sold them to the Commissariat at one place; then stole or stampeded a goodly proportion, marched these off, and after another imaginary battle brought them in to another post, and sold them again. And so on, *ad infinitum*, or till the poor beasts died of old age, or the excitements of too many desperate ventures.

However, these were doubtless baseless scandals of the deepest dye, but it would have taken a good deal to convince the soldier that they were untrue. It was a wonderful game, and perhaps might help to explain the deep chagrin which seized the souls of thousands of honest fellows when the war came to an end. They wanted it to go on for ever.

The whole standard of honour or dishonour in the matter of surrendering to the enemy in battle, was extraordinarily low in the Boer War. Not that the traditional bravery of British officers and men had deteriorated, as one might have thought, and which was clearly disproved in the Great War, but because the standard set, quite insensibly, at the beginning of the war was exceedingly low. The British public, fed by sensational newspapers, were chiefly to blame for this low standard. Easy victories, against ill-armed though brave adversaries, where the enemy lost thousands and we counted our casualties by tens, or at most hundreds, became to be thought the normal proportion in the wars we waged.

This feeling reacted insensibly on officers and men, so that they surrendered after a fight wherein their casualties were in reality nothing very great. Not one of those surrenders would have taken place had the standard been what it was in the Great War. It is a delicate matter, perhaps hard for those unacquainted with military standards to appreciate, but the

Articles of War, by which the Army is governed in peace and war, lay down certain penalties for those who fail in their duties, especially in face of the enemy. Amongst these are death, or penal servitude for life, for certain failures, or crimes, as they are called in military parlance, more especially in respect to moral or physical courage. If a low standard is set at the beginning of a campaign, and the Articles of War are not strictly acted up to, a general decadence in the fighting value of the troops becomes noticeable. Such was the case in the South African War, and such was not the case in the Great War.

There are however cases where leniency does no harm, perhaps good. I was on a drum-head court-martial on a Sergeant of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the "Dhobs" as they called themselves, and were called by all. We were camped outside Barkly West, and this Sergeant, and his name was Murphy, assuredly, with six of his men, was on picket duty in the town. His special duty was, besides keeping order, to prevent the troops from raiding the liquor shops and hotel bars. About four o'clock that afternoon, the Sergeant and all his men were discovered lying dead drunk in the main street of the town.

So they were picked up by an ambulance, and when sober were tried by drum-head court-martial. The Sergeant came first, and with polite attention heard the evidence against him. Asked if he had any questions to put to the witnesses, he replied heartily—

"No, sorr, not one!"

Before passing sentence the President of the Court asks the prisoner—

"Have you any witnesses to call in your defence?"

And finally—

"Have you anything to say in your defence?"

To the former of these questions the Sergeant replied, "No, sorr," but to the latter he answered—

"Yes, your Honour, sir, there's one thing I'd like to say, an' that is I'm thoired of being a Sargint, and will have none of it. A privit is a gentleman compared."

This was said in the most friendly manner, and with no shadow of impertinence about it.

He being a fine figure of a man, and no doubt a good fighting soldier, we thought it would be a pity if Her Majesty lost his

services. So we complied with his polite request, and only reduced him to the ranks, where no doubt he excelled whenever there was any fighting to be done. Indeed we heard that he earned his stripes again, and no doubt took them, for the Sergeants Mess is a pleasant place.

Watty Ross, who as before mentioned, took my place on Sir Hector Macdonald's Staff, was a much more suitable person than I to go to a Highland Brigade. For he is Ross of Cromarty, and knows all about kilts, and haggis, and quaichs, and bag-pipes, being a Highlander born and bred himself, whereas I was an Englishman, and a cavalryman to boot. Watty was too valuable an officer to remain for long an A.D.C., and very soon was promoted to the command of a body of mounted infantry. Whilst thus employed, he was one night engaged in an enterprise which had for its object the surprise of a Boer commando reported to be encamped near a certain farm.

The surprise came off all right, and the farm was surrounded and taken, but immediately after it was subject to a severe and accurate fire from a party of Boers concealed behind a neighbouring kopje. As Watty Ross was crossing a window in the farm, a bullet caught him sideways in the face, and carried away his lower jaw. The blow naturally knocked him senseless, and there was the greatest possible danger that he would suffocate, owing to his tongue dropping back and covering the exit from his throat and lungs. Happily a medical officer who was at hand saved him from this danger. Life without a lower jaw would hardly seem worth living, even if it were possible. But Watty Ross determined that it was both possible and worth while, and consequently made a marvellous recovery. He had however to be invalidated out of the Service, but the spirit of this fine soldier was not dead. Fifteen years later, when the Great War broke out, one of the first to roll up was Watty Ross, as gay and brave as ever. Nor would he take a quiet job at home : by no means. So first he fought in France, and ended up the war in command of a Brigade in Salonica. Of such good stuff are the sons of this old Island home of ours.

As illustrating how medals and clasps may be collected without going within miles of a bullet, or a shell, my brother Leslie had rather a curious and interesting experience. When

the war was fairly old, and the first enthusiasm had rather worn out, Lord Roberts asked me to raise another regiment of Imperial Yeomanry, to be numbered the 26th, and to be called Younghusband's Horse. He gave me *carte blanche* as regards officers, and there was no difficulty about securing these from amongst the gallant gentlemen of England, but it was necessary to have amongst them a few regulars, or ex-regulars, just to leaven the whole. All available British cavalry officers had long ago been used up. There remained only the British officers of the Indian cavalry, and against drawing on these was the Curzon embargo, now become exceedingly strict.

To Lord Roberts I explained my dilemma, but he at once removed it. He said, "Tell me who you want. Lord Curzon is a broad-minded man, and will, I am sure, give you two or three officers at a pinch."

Taking into consideration the name of the new regiment, and the inevitable casualties which may occur, and as it so happened did occur, it seemed an ordinary precaution to have one of my name ready to get into my saddle when it was vacant. So I asked for my brother Leslie, of the 19th Bengal Lancers, who was of the right standing, with war service, and just the right sort to be sent as second-in-command. To fill the post of Adjutant, I asked for C. W. Carey, Adjutant of the Guides Cavalry, who was an experienced Adjutant, and would, I knew, do the new regiment well. In the course of a few hours both these appointments were sanctioned.

Carey was in England, and was most helpful in raising and shipping the regiment to South Africa, but my brother was in India, and had to join us at the seat of war. Coming from India, he naturally landed at Durban, and there sought counsel of the Staff Officer.

"Where is Younghusband's Horse?"

"Haven't the foggiest notion. Better go to Pretoria and find out. Here's your railway warrant."

Arrived at Pretoria, Leslie again made diligent enquiry as to the whereabouts of his new regiment. Everyone was very polite, but nobody had the remotest notion. So they shipped him off to Bloemfontein, in the hope that he might there get on the trail. Again he drew blank. Thus, in the course of a few weeks, he quartered the best part of South Africa, and

at long last ran us to ground in Cape Colony, where we were chasing rebels.

When, after the war, the Army Order came out apportioning clasps to the medal, it appeared that strictly speaking Leslie had accumulated five clasps, whilst he was travelling round by train searching for us! He had been in South Africa in a certain year, and he had been, during the course of his travels, in Natal, the Transvaal, Orange Free State, and Cape Colony, between certain specified dates, and was therefore entitled to the five clasps. Naturally, being a decent soldier, he did not claim, or take them. There were however several funny people who were rather less delicate in this matter. Some there were who never got beyond the Mount Nelson Hotel at Cape Town, but claimed the medal with a clasp or two, and got them.

This curious mania for collecting unearned medals and decorations, which in civil life is somewhat on the par with the purchase of unearned peerages, baronetcies, and knight-hoods, is rather unattractive. Moreover, it seems such bad value. What on earth is the value of a peerage which one's own butler and scullery maid, not to mention one's tailor and bootmaker, besides all one's acquaintances and the public, know has been bought for so much cash down? And what in heaven or earth is the value of a medal or decoration which every soldier knows is a stumour?

At a Levée at St. James's Palace, where rows of medals, or medal ribbons, are under the eyes of experts, though the experts may be subalterns only, we may hear these rows tersely dissected.

"Four good 'uns, twelve stumours."

These on the breast, possibly, of a General. Or—

"All good, bar two Piccadilly medals."

However, more of this when we get on to the Great War, and the really big medal collectors.

At the end of the war, our little column was one of several working in concert under Lord French, in Cape Colony, with Douglas Haig to our left, and B. Doran on our right. We were busy hunting a Boer leader known as Jan Smuts, and to facilitate recognition we were supplied with a photograph of Jan Smuts. When peace was in sight, a conference between Lord Kitchener and the Boer leaders was agreed upon, to take place



JAN SMUTS AS A GENERAL IN THE
BRITISH ARMY IN THE GREAT WAR,
1914-1918.



JAN SMUTS AS A BOER LEADER
IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR,
1899-1902.

Digitized by
Digitized by

at Vereenigen, on the border between the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. It was desired by the Boers that Jan Smuts should be present, and as it was judged that our column was nearest the spot where Jan Smuts had last been heard of, we were instructed to rope him in. Young Hamilton, of the Grenadier Guards, who was staff officer of the column, was therefore deputed to ride forth, with a flag of truce, and hunt for Jan Smuts, and summon him to the conference.

After considerable difficulty, and a thirty-mile ride, Hamilton found Jan Smuts, but Jan Smuts, who had been out of news for some time, was not taking any. He looked on young Hamilton as a guileful decoy, and sent him back with a curt refusal to come in. Wires and counter-wires to Pretoria, with the result that Hamilton, having slept and eaten, was again cast into the void, in a second search for Jan Smuts. This time he took the definite last word—ultimatum, the newspapers love to call it.

“A Peace Conference was being held at Vereenigen; Jan Smuts was invited by his compatriots to be present at it; a special train awaited him at Beaufort West; he could take it, or leave it.”

Jan Smuts decided to take it, and rode in to Beaufort West, and straight to the station, where the special train awaited him. Into this he entered, without a word to anybody, drew down the blinds, and off went the train.

Nearly twenty years afterwards, at a banquet in the City of London, after the Great War, nearly opposite to me was an officer in the uniform of a General in the British Army. On the list of guests he appeared as General the Right Honourable J. Smuts, P.C. It was our old friend Jan Smuts, whom we had hunted, for months and years, in South Africa. Truly the British are wonderfully fortunate in their dealings with men and nations, so that their enemies of one decade are in another fighting for them.

CHAPTER XIII

SOLDIERING IN INDIA

WHEN one returns from a three years' war, the idea most prominent in one's mind is to take an easy, and enjoy oneself. On landing in Bombay after the Boer War, however, I found it had been arranged otherwise. The Embarkation Officer who disembarked us, a nice cheerful and very clean officer, handed me a telegram—

" You are to command the Guides Cavalry at the Delhi manœuvres. Join them at Umballa."

Oh Lord ! However, business is business, and soldiers are soldiers, so there is an end of it. But having just come off the real thing in South Africa, it did not excite one intensely to go and play at the same game, round and about Delhi.

These were the manœuvres on rather a large scale, which were to give Lord Kitchener, the new Commander-in-Chief, his first impression of the Army in India, and were to lead up to a concentration of some 50,000 troops, for the great Coronation Durbar at Delhi, on January 1, 1903. King Edward VII had been crowned King of England, and it remained for him, on a great scale, to be proclaimed Emperor of India. Lord Curzon was still Viceroy of India, and took an infinity of trouble to make the assembly of troops and Princes of India worthy of the occasion, and with pronounced success. A city of tents was pitched, covering several square miles of country, and giving cover to a population equal to that of a large city. Between the rows of tents ran broad roads, lit by electric light, and in the main streets grass plots had been grown, and shrubs and flowering plants planted, making a regular garden city of the camp.

Before her arrival, sauntering into the tent allotted to the Duchess of Portland, one found it so capacious as to include a large drawing-room, two bedrooms, bathrooms, and offices.

One was still more astonished to find that this spacious canvas abode was dubbed, in Ordnance jargon, a "Field-Officer's tent." For apparently, in the good old days of John Company, a Field Officer went forth to war in a tent like this. Reasonably enough, his allowance of transport animals included two elephants and several carts to carry this tent and his other belongings. Brave days!

Anyway, Lord Scarbrough, who came out to India with us to see the show, can swear that the modern Field Officer does not require several elephants to carry his tent, for the two little Kabul tents which he and I occupied, were carried on one mule. The manœuvres which led up to the final concentration naturally seemed rather flat to us, coming straight from the real thing, and Lord Kitchener did not seem wildly enthusiastic about them. Indeed remarks which he made, here, there, and everywhere, and which got round to the troops, however justifiable, had rather an unfortunate effect, being the first utterances of the new Commander-in-Chief.

In fact the troops were rather disgruntled, in their British way, for Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, was also not on their good books. Soldiers, like sailors, are funny folks, they laugh and chaff, and appear to take nothing very seriously, whether practical jokes, or shot and shell, but at bottom is the old English bedrock, which dates from *Magna Charta*.

A little time before the Coronation Durbar, irreverently named by the subalterns the Curzonation Durbar, an unfortunate casualty had occurred in the lines of the 9th Lancers. A punkah coolie had been found dead, and no conclusive clue could be found as to the cause of his death. The low physique and stamina of the class of Indians which supplies menial servants, is phenomenal. A box on the ear, such as a schoolmaster often gave us at our private schools, might kill him straight away. So might a kick, of only half the value which every English schoolboy gets at football, or in the course of his career as a fag.

Lord Curzon at that time was suffering from a severe attack of "poor black man." That is, protecting the poor Indian from the assaults of the brutal British soldiery. Everyone who has served long in India, or anywhere else in the world, knows that the British soldier is the kindest-hearted and most easy-going person imaginable, especially in his dealings with

the natives. He is an absolute wonder, and all nations, white or black, look on him with friendly admiration. He is one of the great ambassadors of the Empire.

However, on the "poor black man" tack, Lord Curzon penalised the whole of the 9th Lancers. Those on leave were recalled, and all leave was stopped, for an indefinite period; in other words, collective punishment, for an untraced crime, accident, or whatever it was. At the Durbar, where Lord Curzon, as Viceroy, took the salute, the Army marched past. First came the Royal Horse Artillery, who, as always, received the applause which their perfect turnout, splendid uniform, and unmatchable horses certainly deserve. Then came the Cavalry Division, brigade by brigade, and regiment by regiment. Each, according to its bearing and appearance, or the number of its friends amongst the spectators, received its share of the welcome.

But when the 9th Lancers came by, led by their full Colonel, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Bushman, who led them through the Afghan War, the whole crowd rose to their feet, and almost a frenzied cheer went up.

My own regiment was some way in front, having passed the saluting base, and we wondered what it was all about. Afterwards we heard, and understood that no man, Viceroy or not, can do what was deemed to be an injustice, without being brought to book. The demonstration was entirely spontaneous, and had nothing of military insubordination about it, for all the soldiers were on parade. It was just the English feeling amongst thousands of civilian spectators, many only visitors from England, which voiced itself.

Between us, quite unintentionally, we very nearly killed the Viceroy, on that same day. The finale of the great display was a charge of the whole Cavalry Division, which in line was a mile and a half in length. This line started hull down on the horizon, almost out of sight, and thence charged on to the line of spectators. At the centre of these was the Viceroy, seated on a horse, in front of the great flagstaff.

One of our subalterns, young Butler, was short of a charger, both of his having gone lame during the manœuvres, so I lent him one of mine, a very well-bred but somewhat flighty chestnut mare, which required rather light hands. It so happened that the Guides Cavalry were the centre regiment of this great line of



OFFICERS OF THE GUIDES—1903.

H. W. Codrington, A. Macnab, Bruce Hay, J. S. Bogle, P. Eliot-Lockhart, A. Buist, C. L. Norman, A. H. Ommaney,
—, Nicholls, G. B. Hodson, R. B. Adams, Sir Charles Egerton, G. J. Younghusband, F. Davies, G. M. Baldwin, A. R. Garden,
H. Butler, C. Kirkpatrick,

no viru
antivírus

charging cavalry, and I personally was straight opposite the flagstaff, which we could see in the far distance, looking like the top-mast of a distant vessel, when we started to charge.

A cavalry charge of this magnitude boils up, so to speak. The start is made at a gentle tit-up, warming up into a brisk gallop, and boils to the point of top speed, and Heaven help anyone who comes down! Then sounds the trumpet call "Halt," and the whole line pulls up dead, whilst clouds of dust, not unusually in the East, roll on, and smother the potentates and spectators near the flagstaff.

Just as we were going our fastest, and were near enough to distinguish the star on the Viceroy's coat, a meteor shot past me—Butler on my chestnut mare, being run away with, and bearing straight down on George Nathaniel Curzon, Viceroy and Governor-General. One trembles to think what might have happened. Butler would certainly have been hanged for *lèse-majesté*, and I, for owning the mare, should probably have been sent into penal servitude for life.

We were all however saved from a horrid fate by the prompt resource of an Indian officer. As Butler shot past him this Indian officer grasped the situation, and being on a very fast horse himself, and riding two stone lighter than Butler, he pricked after him, caught the mare by the bridle, and just wrenched her round in time. Nor were they both killed by the charging line, for at that second the "Halt" sounded, and a decent veil of dust obscured this slight derangement of a faultless line.

After the Durbar, the troops dispersed and were told to walk home at their own expense. Our home lay 500 miles away, and as the regiment had already marched that 500 miles down, we were not much enticed by the thought of doing it again. Marching through country full of game is pleasing enough, but our route lay through regions singularly destitute of sport.

It may seem strange, but we had to pay for everything on the march. We, officers and men, had to pay for our rations, we had to pay hire for the pack animals carrying our kits, we had to pay for our forage, we had to pay for everything, as if we were out on a private pleasure trip. We calculated out, therefore, that it would cost us less to pay for three special trains than to march, and that by so doing we should not only save our pockets, but save the horses from a 500 miles march. The Quarter-

master-General was a friend of mine, so I went to him and asked whether we might rail back at our own expense, instead of marching. He thought I was mad, or a millionaire, but when the figures were placed before him, he was certainly astonished, especially as they showed not only a saving to the regiment, but a saving to Government.

"All right," he said, "but march clear of Delhi, before you take train. And for God's sake, don't say anything to anybody, or everybody will want to do the same, and there isn't rolling-stock for all."

We therefore made easy marches to Umballa, through a fair sporting country, and thence took train, through the arid winter plains of the Punjab. The cost to each man was five shillings, the horses were paid for out of regimental funds, and the officers paid from £3 to £20 according to rank, for themselves, their servants, and chargers.

There was no rest for the wicked however, for shortly after, as we came out of chapel one Sunday—a very beautiful chapel built and owned by the Guides—the Commandant, Robie Adams, handed me a telegram. This missive directed me to depart to the uttermost ends of the world, or to be more accurate, to the furthest limits of the Madras Presidency, 1,500 miles away. There I was to raise a new regiment, to be named the 27th Light Cavalry. Having just set myself up with chargers, and polo ponies, and a trap, and having furnished a house, this was rather a blow, for Government in those days just paid one's fare when thus transferred, and nothing much over. But with the help of one's greatly obliging bankers, one managed somehow. Thus in due course we arrived, bag and baggage, horses, ponies, dogs, some furniture, and some faithful servants, at Bellary in Madras.

The military authorities, having come to the conclusion that the old Madras sepoy had, from the effects of Pax Britannica, lost his martial qualities, decided to muster out the old Madras regiments, and replace them by others, recruited from the more martial races of Upper India.

The 2nd Madras Lancers was one of these, and was to be turned into the 27th Light Cavalry. The 2nd Madras Lancers was the oldest cavalry regiment in the Indian Army, and the reason it was number 2nd instead of 1st, is rather curious and interesting. There were in very old days several regiments

of Madras Cavalry, and the custom was for them to take seniority, and numbers, according to the seniority of their Colonels. Thus if an officer were appointed to command, say the 8th Cavalry, and he happened to be senior to the officers commanding the seven other regiments, his regiment immediately became the 1st Cavalry, and the rest rearranged their numbers accordingly.

As this system was found, after many years' trial, to cause confusion, it was decided that each regiment should receive a fixed number, and stick to it. When this order came out, it so happened that the oldest regiment happened to have only the second senior amongst the commanding officers, and was therefore at the moment the 2nd Madras Light Cavalry. Therefore as 2nd it was fixed, and remained, till this muster out took place.

The 27th Light Cavalry was to consist of one squadron made up of picked men from the disbanded 2nd Madras Lancers, one squadron of Punjabi Mahomedans, one squadron of Jāts from Delhi, and one squadron of Rajputs from Rajputana. The horses we took over *en bloc* from the old regiment, and a very fine lot they were. It was left to me to report how the British officers of the old regiment should be disposed of, there being a sort of impression at Simla that decay might have come over them also. As a matter of fact, they were as good as the British officers in other regiments, so they too bodily came over to the 27th Light Cavalry.

All this simplified matters very much, so that in less than a year we had recruited the regiment, taught it to ride and shoot, trained it to manœuvre; and after inspection it was reported fit for service. Moreover, in this first year sport was not neglected, for we won every polo tournament we entered for, as well as the Athletic Championship of the Army. This latter was certainly a marked achievement for a new regiment.

The 27th Light Cavalry being the third regiment which I had raised, or helped to raise, the *Pioneer*, the leading daily paper in India, was moved to remark in jocular vein—

"Queen Victoria was wont to bestow a Royal Bounty on those mothers of the nation who gave birth to triplets. Naturally the men of the nation were not in a position to qualify for this Royal Bounty, but Lieutenant-Colonel G. J. Young-husband must be held to come very close to it, for he has given

birth to, and raised, three regiments, the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, the 26th Imperial Yeomanry (Younghusband's Horse), and the 27th Light Cavalry."

Having bought an exceedingly beautiful sky-blue uniform, sufficiently and effectively adorned with silver lace, which was the uniform of the 27th Light Cavalry, I was fully prepared, and equipped, to live and die with it. But Fate, disguised as a mean-looking Aryan brother, simply and economically clad in a garment which would make a chorus girl blush, and with an old dish-cloth as a turban, ruled otherwise. He handed me a telegram enclosed in a bright yellow envelope.

We all know what that may mean, and generally does in India. It is an urgent telegram of an official character, containing peremptory orders of some sort. This yellow envelope was no exception. Apparently Robie Adams had also received a yellow envelope, ordering him off to command a brigade, much to his horror, for he loved the Guides and wished to stop there. In consequence I was translated back to my own regiment as Commandant.

The Commandant of the Guides was rather a bigger fellow than the Commandant of any other regiment, because he commanded two regiments, one of cavalry and one of infantry, which was the composition of the Corps of Guides. Moreover, he drew, very approximately, the pay of a brigade commander. It was an appointment which no one could refuse, even though he was 1,500 miles away, and had just bought the whole uniform of another regiment.

Those five years as Commandant of the Guides were amongst the happiest in my soldier career. It was my own old regiment, joined twenty-five years before, and amongst the old friends and old surroundings of a soldier's lifetime. It was quite like old times too, to suddenly find oneself on the warpath again, and to be again, so to speak, sleeping in one's boots.

Just as a little reminder that it was the same old spot, and perhaps to welcome me back, old toughs across the border had their joke on me. Close by my quarters, which were in the Fort, a horn-work enclosed my stables and outhouses : loose boxes for a dozen horses, a saddle-room, a motor-car garage, syces' quarters, the *dhoibi*'s¹ house, and so forth. Two sentries, and barbed wire, guarded this horn-work.

¹ Washerman.

One night our dog, a black chow, began to bark furiously, and tried to get out of our quarters. But being sleepy, and thinking it was only the patrol he was barking at, I cursed him, and slept on. Next morning we found that thieves had ransacked the saddle-room, and the *dhobi*'s house, and had taken off all my saddlery, and two weeks' laundry of the whole household. This in the face of two sentries, a dozen servants, and a barbed-wire fence.

Evidently the time when the chow dog barked was the moment when the thieves were getting through the fence, for there we found bits of our linen, and bits of the marauders' clothes caught on the fence. The police were called in, and could make nothing of it. So I sent for Subadar Ali Gul of the Guides, and put him on the job. The result was sufficiently startling. He selected three men in the Guides Infantry, and told them that the Colonel Sahib would give Rs. 100 to whoever tracked down the thieves. He gave them Rs. 10 each and a fortnight's leave, and sent them off.

In due course they returned, and had a wonderful tale of adventure to tell. They had tracked the thieves, a noted trans-border gang, through village after village, into Peshawur city. There they ran to ground some of our household linen, table-cloths and the like, but all dyed dark blue, in which condition some examples were returned to us for identification. Taking up the trail, the pursuers crossed the border into Bajour, which is independent territory. There they found the saddlery, including a brand-new set of regimental saddlery, which had just cost £24. This had been sold to the chief of that petty state for £2.

There was no redress, so I paid up the promised reward, and thought no more of the matter. It seemed to be a mere bit of border swank, just to show how these expert thieves could steal the property of the Colonel of the Guides, out of the very midst of his Corps.

But the matter did not end there, for a very interesting dénouement occurred. Lord Kitchener, who was new to India and its ways, took exception to the existing system of collecting information regarding the state of affairs across the border, which had always been obtained through the civil authorities. He therefore determined to raise a section of Intelligence agents, spies in other words, on a military basis,

and working under military officers of the Intelligence Department.

The beginning was to be made with twenty-two men, and we were asked to enlist these in the Guides, and to spread them about in different companies, so as not to attract attention. I did not like the idea at all, but being assured that it was only a temporary measure, and that directly the men were trained as soldiers, they would be drafted out of the Corps, I consented.

It is as a rule exceedingly difficult for a man to get into the Guides, and he has to be specially vouched for by Indian officers, men of standing in the Corps, besides being physically up to the standard required. The Indian officers were therefore rather puzzled when these twenty-two men were enlisted without much formality, and they naturally watched them closely. In the end an Indian officer one day came to me and said that he had all along viewed with great suspicion one of these men, who was enlisted in his company. The man seemed very sly and secretive, and was daily writing long letters, which he took to the post office himself. At that time there was a good deal of "unrest," as it was called, in India, and a lot of windy agitators were trying to undermine the loyalty of the Indian soldiers.

The Indian officer thought that the secretive recruit might be an agent or spy, acting for these agitators, and therefore took the liberty, whilst the recruit was on parade, of opening his kit box. There he found, amongst other things, a long document, the writing of which had been interrupted by the parade bugle. This document the Indian officer brought with him, and what was our enormous surprise to find that it was a minute report on me and my daily doings ! It gave the hour at which I rose, what parade I went to, how I occupied my leisure, what I wore, at what time I had my meals, when I went on leave, when I returned : in fact, the hour-to-hour report of a spy. The envelope, to our further surprise, was not addressed to any Indian agitator, but to an officer on the Headquarter Staff in Simla.

The commanding officer of an Indian regiment had very wide powers in those days ; he could not only enlist at pleasure, but could also discharge an undesirable at pleasure. In half an hour the gentleman who had been exercising his secret

service talents on me was out of the Corps ; and within twenty-four hours the other twenty-one had followed him. That was an end of that gang, as far as we were concerned, but an echo came back from it.

Subadar Ali Gul, a fine and gallant fellow, as straight as a die, the same Indian officer who had detailed the men who had traced our linen and saddlery, a few weeks after made another discovery. It was this same band of secret service men, enlisted by request into the Guides, who had engineered the whole business ! Dressed in the uniform of the Guides, they could naturally move about as they pleased in and about the Fort and barracks, without exciting notice.

On the night in question, which was very dark, and cold, two conspirators were told off to distract the attention of the sentries, or if necessary murder them. Others at the given moment went silently to the saddle-room and laundry, broke the locks, and carried the stuff to the barbed-wire fence. There they handed the loot over to the trans-border gang, with which they were in league.

These border thieves, especially when after rifles, their greatest prize, are quite wonderful. Mr. Maskelyne could not do better ; they simply conjure them away. An English military rifle in those parts is more valuable as a saleable asset than diamonds or rubies. Our soldiers' rifles were at that time worth about £2 apiece, but across the border, only a few miles away, they were worth nearly £50 ; whilst a single round of ammunition, worth 2d., would across the border fetch as much as 1s. 4d.

These expert rifle thieves, Ut Kheyl was their clan, could as before mentioned, steal a rifle off a sentry's shoulder ; they could take the rifles of a whole tent full of soldiers whilst they slept, within a few inches ; they could spirit a rifle out of a bed with the soldier sleeping by its side ; they could, in broad daylight, take a whole rack of arms out of a barrack. It was not a matter of "could do," for they have actually done all these.

Living on the border, as do the Guides, they became naturally wide-awake to most of the guiles of the rifle thieves. Then these went one better. One of the clan would, with wonderful skill, wriggle gradually like a snake, on some dark night, close up to a sentry's beat ; then suddenly, as the sentry turned

on his beat, spring at his back, stab him to death, and make off with his rifle. Two sentries we lost this way, and also their rifles and ammunition. It therefore behoved us to think out a new safeguard, and this, like most great ideas, was a very simple one. The thief did not particularly want to kill the sentry ; all he was after was the rifle, but if owing to the precautions taken, he could get it no other way, then the murder of the sentry was all in the day's work.

We made two rejoinders to this new development. The rifle thief was after a good modern rifle, an old blunderbuss was no good to him. We therefore, for night sentry-go, armed our sentries with obsolete weapons. These at night were just as useful to him, perhaps more so, than a high-velocity long-range modern rifle. A sentry at night cannot see more than a few yards, and if he wants to shoot anyone, a scatter-gun is as good, if not better, than a small-bore rifle.

So our friend the Ut Kheyl, finding that his most skilful stalk only procured him an ancient weapon, worth nothing in the market, whilst if he was discovered, a charge of buck-shot at five yards' range, was his fate, decided to leave us alone, and went off to exploit less wily regiments.

But there are times, on service for instance, when the night sentry must have his modern rifle in his hands, ready for the larger emergencies. To meet this situation we had another brain wave. The simple device which frustrated the rifle thief, under these circumstances, was to chain the sentry to his rifle, by means of a thin, strong, steel chain. The chain went round the soldier's neck, under his right arm, and thence to the trigger-guard of his rifle, where it was securely fastened. The chain was made long enough not to impede the soldier in the use of his rifle.

This invention was completely successful, for the rifle thief found that, even if he murdered the soldier, he could not get his rifle away. This system, after it had proved its efficacy, was extended to the whole regiment, and every soldier, whether on or off duty, when we were on service, had his rifle chained to him. All regiments on, or near the frontier, copied this device, to the great annoyance of the fraternity of rifle thieves.

As illustrating the extreme parsimony to which the Indian Government is driven in military expenditure, it may be

mentioned that far from the inventor of this simple device being handsomely rewarded for his invention, regiments which adopted it had to pay for the chains themselves.

In the Great War, rather an amusing episode arose over these chains, which the Kaiser used in his very best manner, and with his moustachios simply curling to the skies. A regiment, which had recently served on the North-West Frontier of India, happened to be sent during the first months of the war to East Africa. Thinking this chain might be useful there against loss of arms, they took their chains with them, and used them attached to their rifles.

Some of these Indian soldiers happened to be taken prisoners by the Germans, and as they naturally could not speak German, to explain the use of these chains, the Germans put their own explanation on them. According to this, these were the chains which the brutal British had brought, so as to chain up their poor German captives, and thus lead them off in gangs into inhuman slavery. Kaiser Bill made the most of this discovery, and tried to curdle the blood of Europe with the tragic story.

During the five happy years spent as Commandant of the Guides, only one big expedition across the border took place. This was one of those rapid and successful operations which were immortalised by a cartoon in *Punch*, entitled "Willcocks' Week-end War," which appeared in the spring of 1908. Sir James Willcocks was commanding the 1st Division at Peshawur, and Lord Kitchener, partly for economic reasons, had decided to try again what was known on the Frontier as the "tip and run" method of dealing with recalcitrant border tribes.

For several generations two systems had been tried in cycles. One system was to send a British force into the disturbed area, there to fight and defeat anyone who wanted to fight, and then sit about for several months, till the enemy sued for peace, and asked humbly to be relieved of the presence of His Majesty's troops. The other system was to make a quick and sudden incursion into the offenders' territory, destroy his fortified strongholds, fight and defeat the armed forces of the enemy, and then at once return to British territory; not infrequently hotly pursued by the tribesmen.

The former system was costly, and somewhat unpopular with those soldiers who had to sit several months in the hornets' nest. The latter system was more popular. The war was

over in a week or two, which pleased the soldiers. Whilst favoured individuals at Simla could make a week-end visit to the seat of carnage, and gather in a medal, as easily as asking a lady for a dance. Indeed one noble fellow, between dances so to speak, gathered in a Mention in Despatches, a D.S.O., and a medal and clasp.

The particular week-end war in which we took part was the Mohmand Expedition of 1908. It occurred in June, the very hottest part of the year, in the hottest region on earth, by no means week-end weather. Climbing bare rocky hills is hard work in the coolest weather, but in a blazing sun, with the thermometer at boiling-point, this class of warfare is—well, excessively tiring. How the Seaforth Highlanders, in their thick kilts, stood the strain, made us all marvel.

We in the Guides were unfortunately attacked by cholera, though how, and when, this fell disease came to us we knew not. A nice young officer named Wells, who had just joined us, died of it, as well as several of the men. In the night I heard young Wells, who was sleeping near, being very ill, and knowing well the sound, at once got up and fetched Cruddas, our medical officer. Cruddas did all he could for the poor boy, but he was too far gone, and died before daylight. Two hours later he lay in his little rocky grave, on the hill-side, and the regiment marched on.

Sir James Willcocks laid his plans admirably, and in the course of a few days had completely defeated the enemy, destroyed his fortified villages, and was on his way back to British territory unmolested.

After the best part of thirty years in the Guides, the day of parting arrived for me, and sad indeed it was. One's regiment is father and mother, wife and child, and best friend, all rolled into one, and bitter is the parting. But the world has to roll on, and nowadays at any rate we have to make room for the young bloods behind. This was not always the case in the good, or bad, old days, for then a commanding officer could sit for ever and ever, Amen, at the head of his regiment. In my first regiment, the 17th Foot, the Colonel had been in command for twenty-two years, since the Crimean War in fact, and could have stopped for another twenty-two years had he so pleased. In another regiment, a cavalry regiment to boot, the Colonel was so old, and afraid of a horse, that he used to walk on

foot down to the parade ground, his charger, an old white Arab, being led behind him. Arriving at the edge of the parade ground, he was hoisted into the saddle, stood under the shade of a tree, and in a voice of thunder, manœuvred the regiment at a walk in his near vicinity. When his voice, or his vocabulary, had given out, he dismissed the parade, was lowered off the patient charger, walked to the mess and drank a brandy and soda.

Another Colonel, an infantryman this time, incurred the displeasure of a too exacting General for habitually drilling his regiment, clad only in pyjamas, from the roof of his bungalow. The compound was large, and the hour of parade in a tropical climate, necessarily early, 5 a.m. or thereabouts. So the Colonel thought that the mountain, which was the regiment, might as well come to Mahomed, which was himself, as *vice versa*. Parade therefore was ordered to be held in the Colonel's compound, and as for coolness he slept on the flat roof of the bungalow, he could, without the fatigue and loss of sleep entailed by shaving, dressing, and getting to horse, cause the troops to perform the necessary evolutions from that comparatively cool elevation. These are not soldiers' yarns, for the writer has seen photographs, immortalising both these episodes.

The only way to get rid of these old Colonels was, in those days, to buy them out. To do this, all the officers in the regiment, each according to his rank, subscribed a sum of money, generally borrowed from the Indian banker, the total running into several thousand pounds. With this sum they enticed the Colonel to go and finish his days at Bath or Cheltenham. Officers now keep much younger and fitter ; they lead a more strenuous, active, and abstemious life than Englishmen in any other profession. Thus, when my own call to go came, it was just after playing in the winning team of an inter-regimental polo tournament.

Nor was Bath or Cheltenham to be my fate, but the command of the Derajat brigade, further down the Frontier, with headquarters at Dera-Ismail-Khan. "Dreary Dismal" it was called, though we found it neither dreary nor dismal. As most soldiers discover, in the course of their service, it is the people in it who make or mar a station ; just as in the Navy there are happy ships and unhappy ships. Partly why Dera-Ismail-Khan was called dreary and dismal, may have

been because some sanitary fanatic, in order to chase away mosquitoes, had cut off all water from the gardens and roads, and turned the whole station into one large dust-heap. The roads were inches deep in fine white dust, and the gardens were dried up and scorched deserts, covered with saltpetre.

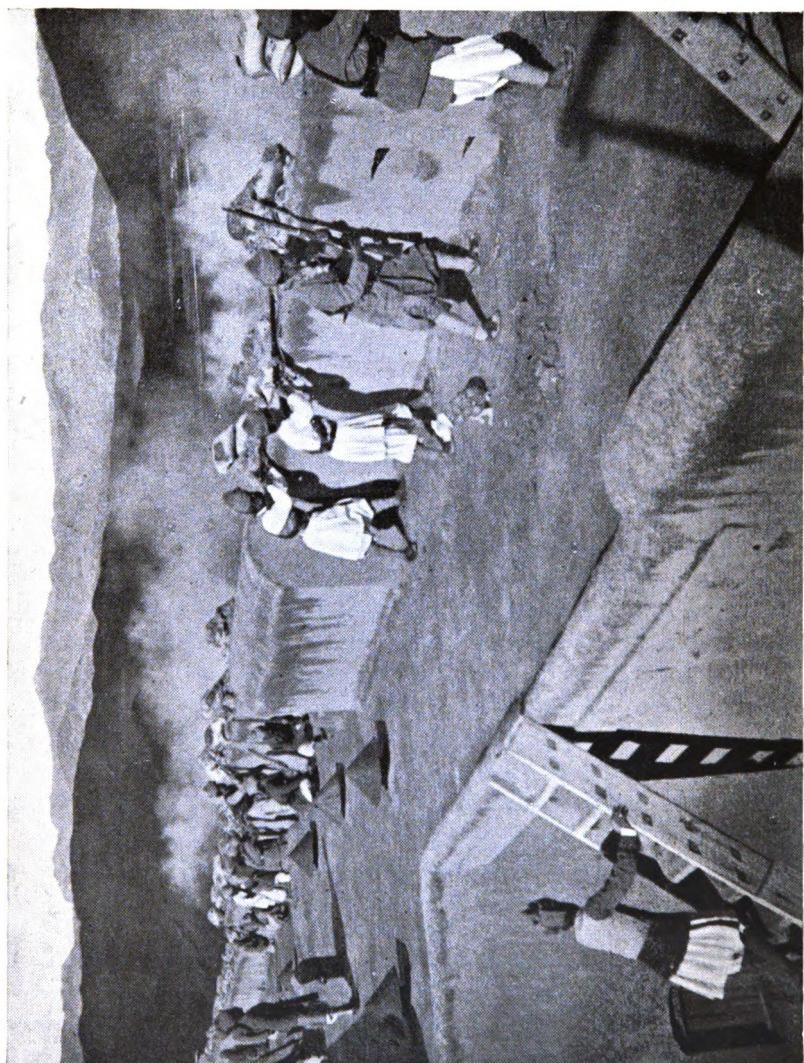
My own experience is that more disease is dust-borne than water-borne, and mosquitoes can be dealt with in other ways, than by turning a cantonment into an imitation of the desert of Sahara. So before many weeks had passed, canals and irrigation cuts were opened up, and in two years the station was a smiling oasis, quite one of the brightest spots on the Frontier.

Our business in that brigade was to keep in order the formidable Waziri tribes, the most turbulent and warlike on the Frontier, and which now again are giving great trouble. Their territory marches for about 120 miles contiguous with British territory, and it was this territory we had to guard.

To give some idea of the problem before us, it may be mentioned that the Malisud Waziris made 168 raids, large and small, into British territory during my first year at Dera-Ismail-Khan. These gangs were as a rule out for plunder, either to round up cattle, or to hold up villages to ransom, or to carry off rich Hindus, their wives and families, holding these also up to ransom. To make the Frontier absolutely proof against such raids would have required a larger force than could be spared, so we had to do as best we could with what we had. The brigade consisted of three Indian infantry regiments, one Indian cavalry regiment, and a battery of mountain artillery armed with 7-pounder guns, carried on mules.

Our system was to have a line of small fortified posts, about 6 miles apart, along the actual Frontier, with a mobile reserve in a central position behind them. Our information, though good, was rarely received early enough to enable us to check the raiders on the Frontier, and we often perforce gave up trying to do so. We found, however, a better way. We would allow the raiding parties to pass through the line of posts, and then closed the way behind them, so that their retreat was cut off.

Many a wonderful adventure and desperate fight fell to the lot of the young officers who tackled these brave and hardy marauders. So successful indeed were they that in the last year before we all went off to the Great War, instead of 168 raids, there were only eight.



DEFENDING A FRONTIER FORT IN WAZIRISTAN.

The mobility and endurance of the troops grew to be remarkable, and here is one instance out of many. One afternoon an S.O.S. message came in to say that Major Dodd, the Political Officer, and Captain Butler of the Guides, with a small escort, were cut off and besieged by several thousand Mahsud Waziris, in one of the Frontier posts. This post was an old-fashioned affair, built in the days when the range of rifles was about 400 yards, but was now completely commanded by a ridge, whence a long-range devastating fire could be poured into the interior. A picket usually held this ridge, but on this occasion was swamped by numbers and driven in.

This post was 60 miles from Dera-Ismail-Khan, and it behoved us to get there as rapidly as possible, if we wished to save our comrades. Happily at that time the brigade consisted not only of first-class troops, but was fortunate in having two first-class staff officers, Shea¹ and Hay², Shea-oh ! and Hay-oh ! as they were called. These two excellent fellows got the brigade, bag and baggage, on the move before night-fall, and a wonderful march it made. Sixty miles is a longish trek even for cavalry, but for infantry carrying their packs, and for mules carrying guns, not to mention the pack animals carrying food and ammunition, it was indeed a great endeavour.

Yet they did it in one, just making short halts by the way for food and drink, and perhaps forty winks occasionally, by the wayside. At the end of those 60 miles to see the 27th Punjabis, and 45th Sikhs, scale the precipitous hills, to the rescue of their comrades, was indeed an inspiring sight. It was too much at any rate for the Mahsud Waziris, who though treble our strength, and armed with the latest rifles, broke and fled. These gallant troops earned for their commander, who had really done nothing, a great and surprising honour.

On January 1, 1913, as we were going in to breakfast, a telegram was handed in, which read—

“ His Majesty has appointed you a Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire. Please accept my hearty congratulations.—HARDINGE, Viceroy.”

That was really a very joyful surprise, the more so as it was

¹ Now Lieut.-General Sir John Shea, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., commanding the Western Army in India.

² Now Colonel J. B. Hay, C.M.G., D.S.O., commanding the 19th Punjabis.

entirely unexpected. And what added to the glow was the pleasure it seemed to give to the brave fellows, officers and men, who after four years of rough and tumble, hard fighting and hard marching, had won this distinction for their commander.

Toby was the stable dog. He was supposed to belong to one of the syces, but he really belonged to my first charger Seifton. Seifton was an English horse, bred on a farm of that name in Shropshire, which belonged to my brother-in-law, Charlie Wood. Toby's pedigree was rather obscure, but he had a strong strain of Aberdeen terrier about him, and that is perhaps why he took such a fancy to Seifton, and ignored country-bred or Arab horses. Directly Seifton arrived from England, Toby attached himself to him. He always slept in a corner of his loose-box, and never left him night or day. It did not matter who rode Seifton, whether I myself, or my orderly, or one of the syces, or one of my friends, Toby went too ; and it mattered not whether it was in the middle of a scorching hot day, or the middle of a freezing cold night, or how long the way.

When Seifton went to the Hills, Toby went too, and there these two faithful friends passed away into the pleasant fields, where they could roam for evermore. We were away in England at the time, and the old syce told us the story.

Seifton got fever, and all that care and skill could do did not save him, and after a fortnight he died.

Toby was with his friend all the time, and only left him to go out and meet the Vet., and wagged his tail in welcome. When Seifton died, Toby, the stable dog, mourned deeply. He saw his friend buried and howled bitterly. Then he slunk back to Seifton's old loose-box, and curling up in his own old corner, just slept himself away. The old syce said—

"Perchance the fever from the big horse reached him also, for Tobee would not eat food but drank water. In the end the dog died also, and he was buried by the great horse. It was God's will."

Dera-Ismail-Khan is an appallingly hot place in the summer. I doubt even if Satan, with all his experience, has been able to produce a "Better 'Ole," or rather, an "'Otter 'Ole." To get down to concrete figures, most of us can remember going to bed at 11 p.m., on the roof of our bungalows, and finding that even in that elevated spot, open up to the heavens, the

thermometer would read 102 degrees. The pillow and sheet felt as if they had just been held before a fiery furnace. Even the thinnest silk pyjamas felt like unbearably thick woollen garments.

For six months in the year we, and our little never-ending war, were isolated from the world by a roaring, raging, devastating torrent, 9 miles wide, the river Indus in flood. A wonderful river the Indus ; in winter a mild little affair, running in three snug little beds, each scarcely as broad as the Thames at the Tower. But when the snows melted, up away in the great Himalayan Mountains, the mild little winter streams joined hands, and rose into one great roaring, devastating flood of the colour of chocolate and milk, 9 miles wide from hither shore to farther shore.

It had strange moods too, the Indus, for one year it would swing to the east, which did not matter much, for there were only great sandhills, and a desert on that side. Another year it would swing towards us, and cut away miles of fertile territory, and threaten the very existence of our bungalows and barracks. Many a time, the whole garrison would be out, digging for dear life, to build up dykes against the flood. During the few years we were at Dera-Ismail-Khan, the river Indus ate in 6 miles towards us, and washed that great strip of territory down to the ocean. That is to say, when we first arrived at Dera-Ismail-Khan, the nearest channel of the river was 6 miles distant, and when we left it was lapping against the parade ground, only a few hundred yards from our doors.

Dera-Gazi-Khan, the next Frontier station down the river, was swept away in very deed. It had once stood several miles away from the river, but suddenly the swing set towards it in earnest, and its doom was settled. We dropped down in a boat, some 80 miles, to see the tragic sight. It was wonderful. The great chocolate expanse of water just rolled sullenly by, eating into the bank. First a row of shops, or an officer's bungalow, or a mosque, might stand out on a cliff over the stream, then came a roar, and a great splash, and the row of shops or mosque or bungalow fell into the flood, and was no more seen or heard of. All the troops and inhabitants of the city had been evacuated, and perched on high ground, 6 miles away. Having thus worked its destructive destiny, the Indus swung to the east, and left the ruins of a goodly city and

cantonment, now again 6 miles away from its nearest trickle.

In the winter these Frontier stations rejoice in a beautiful climate, bright warm sunshine, cool crisp air, and with a touch of frost at night. Very much the same climate as is found in the winter in Egypt, or Algiers. Indeed a glance at the map will show that Peshawur is on much the same line of latitude as Gibraltar, or Cairo.

But whatever the weather, hot or cold, one thing never varied, and that was the risks, which every British officer ran, throughout the year, and the perils in the midst of which he lived. These perils and risks were incurred not only whilst engaged in open hostilities, but might be met during any hour of any day.

The Mahsud Waziri, brave in fight, and very hardy, is also the most treacherous hound on earth. Nothing tames him, or cleanses him from his inborn lust for murder. Other tribesmen from along the Frontier will enlist in the Indian regiments of our Army, and serve faithfully and well for years on end. Not so the Mahsud Waziri; he will enlist, or he will take service with an Englishman, but sooner or later the lust for blood is too strong for him, and he will murder his officers, or the Englishman who has befriended him, without a qualm, and then escape back to his native hills.

Often this insane thirst for blood took another form. Gangs of Mahsuds, some working singly, and some in parties of two or three, would secretly leave their country, and in various guises, make their way down to Bannu, or Tank, or Dera-Ismail-Khan, with the avowed intention of murdering British officers. Sometimes they would get taken on amongst a gang of coolies, employed on road-making, or cutting canals in British territory, and thus wait their chance of killing a solitary officer. Others, disguised as mendicants, or holy men, would mix with the crowd at fairs, or in the bazaars of the city, and there seize their opportunity. Another plan was to lie hidden near the stages where ponies were changed by travellers who were passing through by tonga, and there to seize an unguarded moment to work their murderous ends.

Our own Intelligence department was very fairly efficient, and we generally got early information when these murder gangs were out, and took our precautions accordingly. On one occasion we received reliable information, through spies, that

thirty-six of these desperadoes had set out, each having sworn on the Koran that he would kill an Englishman.

The British officer, and especially the young British officer, hates to appear fussy or over-cautious. He is a gay and débonnaire fellow, brave to a fault, and ready to take any risks, great or small, but he dislikes taking what he considers undue care of himself. So he has to be ordered to do so !

Thus, when these Mahsud murder gangs were known to be out, very strict orders were issued. In the first place, no British officer was allowed to sleep unguarded, for that was the most dangerous time. On a dark night a Mahsud could elude the ordinary sentries or patrols, and working silently from one garden to another, sneak into a bungalow and murder the officer in his bed. At dangerous times there was a sentry, with his reliefs, actually guarding each officer's bed. Then he was on no account allowed to go to mess, or anywhere else at night, unaccompanied by an armed orderly. Whilst the officers were at dinner, their mess was closely guarded. Nor were officers allowed to go singly anywhere out of cantonments, and were ordered then to be armed, and whenever possible to take their armed orderlies with them.

In spite, however, of all these precautions, many a cold-blooded murder was committed without apparently any rhyme or reason, except from pure lust for blood. These murders were often instigated by the Mullahs, or priests, who assured these ruffians that they would have a front seat in the stalls in the heavenly theatre if they killed an infidel, and themselves in consequence got caught and hanged. If they could kill a British officer, and escape, so much the better, and great heroes they became in their own country.

But the arm of the British Government is long. Each one of those murderers was known, for he made no secret of his prowess. He was from that day a marked man, and the British Government had its eye on him. His every movement was recorded, and patiently he was kept in view, it might be for years. Then one day, thinking all was forgotten, he would stroll into the bazaar at Bannu, or Tank, or Dera-Ismail-Khan, to make a purchase, or have a meal.

When, however, he got up to move off he would suddenly and quietly, but quite firmly, find himself overpowered, and a pair of handcuffs clapped on his wrists. The rest of his history

would be short. He would be tried by the Deputy Commissioner for murder, sentenced, and duly hanged. Not infrequently this vindication of British law begat a storm of vendettas, against the Deputy Commissioner, the police, and Englishmen at large, engineered by the relatives of the defunct malefactor, and encouraged by the Mullahs. Thus it was our business to see that British officers, in their cool disregard for danger, did not add to the list of Mahsud triumphs in the assassination line.

It was a curious and thrilling life on the Frontier. Imagine, for instance, playing a game of polo at Hurlingham, and then having to fight your way home through a storm of bullets. Yet this exciting finish occurred one evening in the Swat Valley. Picture yourself sitting down to dinner in Knightsbridge Barracks, every officer wearing a revolver, and the swords of all stacked in the corners of the room, yet the Guides so dined nightly in the days of Lumsden. Imagine behind the waiter, carrying in the entrée, a sudden apparition, a man with a rifle pointed at the Colonel. A loud report, a whiff of smoke, and the Colonel dead. That too happened at an officers' mess on the Derajat border.

Some might think that living, year after year, amidst these ever-present, lurking dangers, the nerves of all would become ragged and uncertain. Not at all, that is not the British way: the longer he is at it, the cooler and more self-possessed the British officer becomes. He is a priceless and peerless person, the finest knight the world has ever seen. When an officer or officers were murdered, was there any difficulty in getting others to fill their places? None whatever. On the contrary, applications would come in from all over India, officers vying with each other to fill the vacant places. It is a fine spirit, and there is nothing much wrong with England whilst it remains.

It is a fine life on the Frontier, and when the Great War came, it was with many a regret I left it, for it had been my home for thirty-six years.

Under the grey shades of the old Tower of London, where we now live in peace, the old memories and the old adventures, and the brave deeds of gallant comrades of the past, shine brightly in our hearts.

CHAPTER XIV

EARLY DAYS IN THE GREAT WAR

IMPORTANT telegrams always seemed to arrive as we were going to breakfast. In accordance therefore with precedent, before porridge, one day in the early autumn of 1914, a telegram, the yellow brand, was handed in—

" You are appointed to command a brigade consisting of the 51st and 53rd Sikhs, 56th Rifles, and 5th Gurkhas for service overseas. Further orders will follow."

This telegram was not received with overflowing enthusiasm. It seemed to portend East Africa, or the Persian Gulf, or some other equally uninteresting side-path.

We all wanted to fight the Germans in Europe, and were not the least desirous of wandering off into distant theatres. Personally, I felt I should be more usefully employed in warding off invasions of Afghans, or the border tribes, than in wandering about German East Africa, or Mesopotamia. The "further orders," however, somewhat reassured us, for we were to be equipped for "Lines of Communication, France." This we sanguinely read to mean somewhere between Paris and our fighting front in France, and that would mean that we should be up in the fighting line, within a week or two, to replace a tired brigade.

But the "Lines of Communication, France," alluded to proved to be much longer than we anticipated, for they led from Bombay, through Egypt, to Marseilles. Our brigade, which was named the 28th (Frontier Force) Brigade, was assembled at Karachi, the port of embarkation. The title in brackets emphasised the fact that all the regiments composing it belonged to the old Punjab Frontier Force, which during half a century had earned a wonderful fighting record.

One of the regiments of the brigade was the 53rd Sikhs. Belonging to this regiment was an officer named Captain Smart. When the Great War broke out, Smart was holding

a temporary appointment in one of the Frontier irregular corps, much sought after by young officers, who preferred a constant life of fighting and hardship to the softer military atmosphere of Simla, or even of Umballa.

When the 53rd Sikhs were ordered on service, Smart applied to be allowed to rejoin his own regiment. But the Indian Army Regulations were somewhat inelastic in these cases, and the application was refused. Thereupon Smart applied for ten days' leave, and disappeared into the blue. In such cases, after a decent interval, an officer is reported as being "absent without leave." After a further interval a Court of Enquiry is held, and if the Court can gain no intelligence about the whereabouts of the missing officer, a report to that effect is made to Army Headquarters.

After a further interval, and there still being no clue to the officer's disappearance, he is posted as a deserter, and in the *Gazette* appears an intimation that His Majesty has no further need of his services. In other words, he is cashiered, and branded as a deserter. For an officer to be so branded, even in peace time, is an exceedingly rare occurrence, perhaps once in twenty years, but on the eve of a war, never to my knowledge. All who knew Smart were convinced that he must either have been secretly murdered, or that there must be some other explanation, quite alien to cowardice, which accounted for his disappearance.

They were right. Smart had joined the aforesaid Frontier Corps so as to see all the fighting he could, at a time when profound peace reigned elsewhere. To an officer with this fighting spirit it was intolerable to be locked up in minor skirmishes, when a great war, against a great European Power, was going on. So failing to secure official sanction, he decided to take French leave.

Working his way to France, hidden away amongst the third-class passengers on some stray ship, Smart landed at Marseilles, and at once made for the headquarters of the Foreign Legion, that celebrated French corps which for many years has welcomed born fighters of every nation. Whether there were difficulties about the language, or whether the French were too inquisitive about his antecedents, is not recorded; but anyway Smart decided not to enlist in the Foreign Legion, and took the further risk of going on to England. Here he

found that a young man, with military training, could without much difficulty secure the King's shilling. Thus Smart before long found himself enlisted in that grand old fighting regiment, the 2nd Queen's, as Private Thomas Hardy. Not a soul knew who he was, or whence he came, except that his name was Thomas Hardy, with such other fancy details as were filled in on his attestation papers. Naturally, with his training and experience, Private Thomas Hardy in a few weeks passed through all the required tests, and was drafted to a battalion at the front in France.

There he at once established a reputation for extreme bravery, in a regiment of brave men. There was no duty too onerous, no service too dangerous, for Private Thomas Hardy. Indeed he sought danger, and often out of his turn volunteered for hazardous service. It was at this stage, and seeing the risks he daily ran, that he confided, under a vow of solemn secrecy, to be broken only on his death, his true name and identity to the Sergeant-Major.

So far Private Thomas Hardy had come unscathed through the most desperate adventures, quite apart from the daily battle risks which all alike incurred. One night however a trench raid, or a raid to knock out a machine gun, or something of that sort, of a particularly deadly nature was found necessary, and volunteers were called for. Amongst these at once stepped forth Private Thomas Hardy. The enterprise took place, the object aimed at was achieved, but there was only one sore wounded survivor, and that survivor was not Private Thomas Hardy. Had it been he would have become Private Thomas Hardy, V.C.

Thus died a soldier of the Blood.

The Sergeant-Major, his lips now unsealed, revealed the identity of Private Thomas Hardy.

Need it be added, that His Majesty on hearing the story of this gallant soldier, at once ordered the *Gazette* cashiering Captain Smart to be cancelled, and reinstated him in his old rank and place.

Britain has produced many fine soldiers, but no finer soldier than "Private Thomas Hardy."

The Brigade sailed from Karachi, and one transport was apportioned to each regiment, whilst with us sailed two or three more ships, carrying transport carts and animals, supplies,

and ammunition. Our little squadron had been ordered, though we knew nothing about it at the time, so well were secrets kept, to rendezvous at a certain spot in the ocean, apparently easily recognisable by sailors, with a much larger fleet which had sailed from Bombay.

With great precision our sailors, and the sailors from Bombay, found the exact spot, and so did a little old-fashioned French warship, named the *Dupleix*, which was to form our escort. There were thirty-eight transports altogether when we joined up, and these were marshalled in four lines, each line about a mile apart, with about a quarter of a mile distance between ships, fore and aft. At the head of the convoy rode the little *Dupleix*, looking about the size of a Thames penny steamer.

At this time the German raiders, the *Emden* and the *Königsberg*, were ranging the Eastern seas, and our skipper told us that should one of these appear, the orders were for the transports to scatter to the four winds, at their best pace, whilst the gallant little Frenchman took on the heavy fighting. Our skipper also informed us that ours was a double-screw turbine-driven ship, a mail boat on the Calcutta-Rangoon line, and could show a pair of heels to any ship on that ocean. We thought this an excellent asset, but did not quite like the idea of running away, and leaving the little Frenchman to fight our battles. Being however completely unarmed, it was the only possible course.

How near the *Königsberg* was to chancing across this rich argosy became clear a few days later, when we saw smoke rising from a burning ship, on the far horizon. This ship had been captured by the *Königsberg*, set on fire, and run on shore. She must therefore have unconsciously crossed our bows, as she went southward, and not so very far out of sight.

We had one awful moment, nothing to do with the *Königsberg*, just before this. The *Dupleix* slowed down, as did all of us in concert, and signals began to fly from her mast-head. In answer to the instructions thus signalled, several ships circled to the south.

"They are for East Africa!" we all exclaimed, aghast, thinking our turn would come next.

Then they circled east.

"Back to Bombay," we thought.

Once clear of the rear of the convoy, they made another turn, and this time to the north.

"Good God ! They are for the Persian Gulf. Poor devils ! "

Then the old *Dupleix* set herself going again, and we, with joy in our hearts, ploughed after her.

And so, without further adventure, up the Red Sea to Suez. Here we found what we were wanted for ; to relieve British troops, which were required in France. These were British regiments which had, till the outbreak of war, garrisoned India, and were now on their way home, and which were formed eventually into the famous 29th Division, of undying fame in Gallipoli, and elsewhere. Our duties, taken over from these, were to guard the Suez Canal, and keep it open for traffic, and to defend Egypt against a Turkish invasion.

The Canal, which is 92 miles long, was divided into three sections, an Indian brigade being allotted to each section. Sir Herbert Cox held the Port Said end, Sir Charles Melliss the Suez end, whilst my little lot held the centre section. Of artillery we were singularly deficient, having at first only the Kohat Mountain Battery, equipped with 7-pounder guns, and the Berkshire battery of Territorials, armed with obsolete 16-pounder guns. Sir Alexander Wilson commanded the whole Canal area ; and as Military Governor, High Commissioner, and everything else combined, in Egypt, was that fine soldier and administrator, Sir John Maxwell, known in more familiar days as "Conky" Maxwell.

To aid in the defence of the Canal, the Navy, under Admiral Sir Richard Peirse, whose flagship was the *Swiftsure*, furnished small craft which were invaluable in patrolling the Canal, and looking out for mines. The *Swiftsure* is a direct descendant of the old *Swift and Sure*, one of Drake's ships which helped to defeat the Spanish Armada. Below the bridge, in brass lettering, are displayed the battle honours of all the *Swiftsures* that have followed the original old *Swift and Sure*, and the defeat of the Armada is to be seen amongst these honours.

Very determined efforts were made by the Germans to stop the traffic through the Suez Canal, which was a British main artery connecting India, Australia, and the East, with the main theatre of war in France. Through the vigilance of the Navy, a Dutch ship was intercepted at Suez, carrying an apparently innocent cargo of lime. But the sailors spotted

the fact that you had only to open a cock or two, when the ship was in the Canal, not only to sink her, but in doing so to form a solid wall of concrete, which the lime would become when mixed with water. Before sinking her the ship would, of course quite accidentally, have been slued at right angles across the Canal, so as to completely block it. The Dutch were neutrals, and lime was not then a contraband of war, but the Navy got over that all right. They put a party of blue-jackets on board, who took care that no tricks were played, then piloted the ship carefully through the Canal, and pushed her out to sea in the Mediterranean. It was ascertained afterwards that she had come right round the Cape on this little errand.

But our great fear was mines, and extraordinary vigilance on the part of the Army, and of the Navy, was necessary to prevent casualties from these. For one ship blown up in the Canal might stop all traffic, perchance for weeks, till a new passage had been dredged round it. During the whole year we were guarding the Canal, there was only one casualty, and that a minor one. A Holt liner hit a mine in the Bitter Lakes, but was not damaged enough to sink, and was towed clear of the fairway, patched up, and sent back home.

We had several shocks, however, and the greatest of these was when one day we tracked down and fished out of the Canal a huge mine, and found it intact, but with two hard grazes cut into it. These had manifestly been made by passing ships, and the two ships which had last passed that way were the *Swiftsure*, and the P. and O. mail boat!

The way we tracked down these mines was rather ingenious. Our spies brought in news that they had seen in Damascus sixteen mines, each as big as a camel, they said, which were destined for the Suez Canal. These, they added, were marked in large white numerals, I to XVI, so we kept a sharp look-out for them.

The Canal being 92 miles long, it was naturally impossible, with the few troops and patrol boats we had, to have an absolutely inviolable line the whole way, but we did the next best thing. The whole length of the eastern bank of the Canal, that is the one towards the enemy, is composed of loose white sand. Every evening a heavy log, about ten feet long, with a sacking fringe, was dragged by camels along the top of the

Canal bank, between each of the posts. These posts were garrisoned by small bodies of troops, and stood a mile or two apart. The logs, thus dragged, made a perfectly smooth surface, ten feet wide, along the edge of the Canal, throughout its whole length. Nothing could cross it, even a dog or a jackal, without leaving a footprint.

Working from each post, small observation patrols every hour inspected this track carefully, and should footprints or other suspicious marks appear on it, these were at once followed up. This device was useful, not only in spotting mines, but also in following up and running down spies sent by the Germans to get information. Should the marks show that a mine had been dragged or lifted across the track, the spot was at once buoyed, and a naval patrol boat sent for. All traffic was stopped till the patrol boat had swept the channel, and had recovered or blown up the mine. How the mine which was grazed by two ships escaped notice has never been explained, but was due probably to a slack patrol party, which did not notice the marks across the sand track.

The French flagship, the *Montcalm*, had an astonishing escape. The French Admiral, being rather bored, thought he would go for a cruise down the Red Sea, for a bit of a change. Leaving his anchorage, at the head of the Gulf of Suez, just outside the Canal, he went for a week's outing, and one night, arriving after dark, anchored in the Gulf of Akaba. Next morning one of the sailors, looking over the bows, saw a funny-looking thing in the water, a couple of fathoms down. He thought at first it was a large turtle, and then it struck him as strange that it did not move. So he called an officer, and both gazed at it, but could make nothing of it. The matter being reported, the Admiral ordered a boat out to investigate. With the aid of a sea telescope the strange beast was examined, and proved to be one of the Damascus mines with a large white IX painted on it. It was exactly 15 yards from the bow of the *Montcalm*, and if she had run that extra 15 yards, when she came to an anchor the night before, up she would probably have gone.

Having gingerly secured this trophy, which was eventually sent to the Museum in Paris, and having made it innoxious, it occurred to the French Admiral that this might perchance be not a lone lorn fish. He therefore sent a boat to prospect

around, and to his great joy found two other mines, the three being anchored so as to form a triangle. In the middle of this triangle the good old *Montcalm* was riding free. Moreover she had been swinging free at her anchor all night, but by an extraordinary piece of good fortune had not touched off one of them. I happened a few days later to be lunching on board, and have never seen anyone so pleased as was the French Admiral. He smote his chest with pleasure, and simply beamed over his victory against the machinations of the "Sâle Boche."

Be it mentioned, by the way, that it was through no fault of ours that these mines had been laid, for they were outside our domain, which was the Canal proper.

The French Admiral, not having much English himself, asked Captain Boyle¹ of H.M.S. *Bacchante*, to lend him a signaller, as most of the messages, by wireless and otherwise, came in English. Captain Boyle lent him a nice, smart young signaller, who became the apple of his eye to the French Admiral. During lunch in came a message in English.

"Cherchez le cher Jones," at once commanded the Admiral.

Le cher Jones, the aforesaid smart young signaller, being cherchez-ed, came in, with his cap in his hand, English sailor fashion.

"Voulez-vous dire qu'est ce qu'il y a dans cette telegramme, Jones?" Jones A.B. had picked up that much French, and read the message out in English.

"Parfaitement, Jones. What answer shall be sent?" asked the Admiral.

"Well, sir, I should say the answer was——" and he gave his suggestion.

"All right, Jones. Brave garçon! Send it."

From my frequent visits to the French flagship, I came to the conclusion that le cher Jones commanded the French fleet. I asked him one day how he liked his job. He said he liked it very much, and he added in a confidential whisper—

"The grub's awful good on board, sir, much better than what we gets in our Navy; so I don't mind how long I stays."

But the *Bacchante*, before long, had to go off to the Dardanelles, and le cher Jones with her.

¹ Vice-Admiral the Hon. A. Boyle, C.B., C.M.G., now Fourth Sea Lord at the Admiralty.

We also lost Boyle, who was really a great asset. The best class of British Naval officer. First class at his own job, and with a genius for getting on with everybody, whether British soldiers, or French sailors. Boyle probably saw more varied service during the war than any Naval officer, and was in practically every big Naval action from start to finish.

Personally, I thought the Turks would never attack us in force on the Canal. It seemed such a hopeless task to bring an army across the waterless desert, and to attack our positions on the Canal. For this final attack must be made across a perfectly open country, deep in sand, and over which we could see plainly for miles. The coastal road, leading from Palestine to Port Said, was feasible enough. Napoleon had shown that, but at best it was a narrow causeway, which could be barred by a few troops. To attack any other portion of the Canal meant crossing the open desert.

However I was quite wrong, and a really remarkable piece of German Staff work brought some 15,000 Turks across the very worst part of the desert, on this forlorn hope. Making demonstrations up Port Said way, and down in the Suez direction, the main attack was launched on the centre section. It was not really a very formidable affair, but kept us amused for a couple of days. We were quite surprised, afterwards, to hear that there was a good deal of excitement, not to say anxiety, in Whitehall over it. This perhaps accounted for a K.C.M.G. suddenly descending, like a bolt from the blue, on my devoted head.

The main Turkish attack was launched close to the Toussam redoubt, and was made by about 7,000 men, in the middle of the night of February 3-4, 1915. The Turkish column slightly lost direction, and instead of hitting off a gap between two posts, partially bumped into Toussam. This aroused the already alert defence, and the Turks got it hot and strong. The Arab guide, who had made this mistake, we found next day shot dead with his hands tied behind him. The cleverest guide might make a mistake of a few hundred yards in a sandy desert, without tree, or bush, or rock as landmark, and on a pitch-dark night. But he was judged to have treacherously led the troops into a trap, and suffered accordingly.

The Turks had brought with them, carried by hand,

aluminium pontoons made in Berlin, and completely furnished with bridging equipment, planks, ties, anchors, and oars. These our airmen had reported when far away in the desert. They could make nothing of them, they looked like looking-glasses carried by a lot of men. They were in fact, when thus reported on, full of drinking water, which was being carried for the troops.

The gaff being thus blown, so to speak, it was now manifestly impossible to build a pontoon bridge, but the Turks nothing daunted, launched these pontoons, and using them as row boats, attempted to send parties across the Canal. Here again they struck bad luck, for at that exact spot, on the near bank, was entrenched half a battery of small guns, with an escort of Sikhs.

These drove back or sank all the pontoons, save one or two, though how they managed to do so, in the pitch darkness, was a marvel. The few Turks, thirty or forty, who managed to cross, got round behind these guns, and began peppering them from the rear ; and it was only when daylight came that they were rounded up, and made prisoners.

This half battery of artillery was manned by Egyptians. They had been sent down to the Canal, really rather as a political move, to show how fiercely the Egyptians were warding off the hated tyranny of the Turks. It may now perhaps be divulged, in deep confidence, that the Egyptians had no ill-feelings at all towards the Turks, indeed in the course of the thirty odd years of Pax Britannica they had quite forgotten all ancient tyrannies. Moreover the Turks were Mahomedans, and therefore fellow religionists, and the Egyptians in their heart of hearts were all for welcoming them. This was one of the political problems which Sir John Maxwell so skilfully handled.

It is usual for a battery of artillery when on the move, to have an escort of cavalry or infantry, but usually guns in position are considered to be sufficiently protected by the troops in their vicinity. However, as a special mark of distinction, this half battery of small guns had an escort of a company of Sikhs, under a British officer. The chief duty of this escort was however not so much to protect the guns from the Turks, as to ensure that the personnel did not make tracks for Cairo on their first appearance. The precaution was a

timely one, for though the Egyptian officer stuck to his guns, his men were far from doing so.

In this dilemma the British subaltern, as usual, rose to the occasion. He had been through a mild course of gunnery, and knew how to load a gun and how to fire it off. It was he, therefore, aided by the Sikhs, who really fired the point-blank shots into the Turkish pontoons, which stopped the crossing.

The first thing that struck one, looking out over the desert when daylight came, was a large number of little black objects which lay about thickly on the white sand. These puzzled us greatly till, later in the day, a patrol went out and discovered that they were boots ! The Turks were evidently opposed to the idea of dying in this cumbersome foot-gear ; or possibly they thought that it would be more convenient to wade across the Canal barefooted. For the Germans had stuffed them up with all sorts of nonsense, including easy fords across the Canal, as when the Israelites crossed.

When the Turks, from many miles out in the desert, saw big ships passing up and down the Canal, they were informed by the Germans that the Canal had already been captured, the British Fleet disposed of, and that these were all German ships passing through.

So certain were not only the rank and file, but the higher command, of getting across the Canal, that in Djemal Pasha's orders for the next day, which we captured, were given detailed instructions for the march on Ismailia and Cairo. These orders were found, with other papers and odds and ends, at what had been Djemal Pasha's headquarters on the night of the attack. These headquarters, to our immense surprise, were within 1,000 yards, in the perfectly flat sandy desert, of the French warship *Requin*, which was anchored in Lake Timsah, near Ismailia.

When the Turkish attack was beaten back, some 500 Turks remained marooned on the Canal bank. These after a short fight were enveloped and made prisoners, and were in due course marched through Cairo, so as to convince unbelievers that the Turks really had been defeated.

The Egyptians are funny people. During the British occupation, which had lasted some thirty-three years, they had risen to a degree of prosperity and security not even equalled in the days of Pharaoh. Yet they hankered for the

old corrupt, impoverished days of Turkish rule, and were distinctly disappointed when this invasion failed.

The Turks must have lost a goodly number of men over this venture, not only from shells, bullets, and drowning, but from the hardships of the desert march to and fro. We had very few cavalry, a mere handful, but these in following up the retreating Turks came across a strange scene. About 10 miles out, they found two lines of trenches, facing each other, and only a few hundred yards apart, bearing signs of a deadly conflict : bloody bandages, corpses, and abandoned equipment. Apparently two bodies of retreating Turks had chanced across each other in the dark, and each mistaking the other for the English, had entrenched and fought a little battle.

Spies afterwards told us that only 2,000 Turks, out of 15,000, returned to Palestine, and that these disbanded themselves, and went to their homes. It was a pity we had not more cavalry and horse artillery, for we might then have captured the lot.

Rather a nice little thing happened at Christmas. A parcel arrived addressed to " Demas, care of Senior Officer, Cairo." Not knowing who Demas was, the Senior Officer opened the parcel, and found that it contained 1 lb. of sugar and 1 lb. of biscuits. There were also in it two letters. One was from a lady.

" DEAR DEMAS,—

" This is to wish you a Happy Christmas, and be a brave good old horse, and after the war come home to us."

And the other was in a child's handwriting, and read—

" DEAR DEMAS,—

" A very Happy Christmas and New Year. I send you some sugar and biscuits for a Christmas present. Fight bravely and after come home for Hurst Show in July.

" From your loving JOAN."

When the remount officers were collecting every available horse for the war, they visited a little home in Lancashire, where there was a treasured hunter named " Demas." He was so called, apparently, as a result of an old adventure, when

he and his rider had parted company over a fence, and the horse had gone home. "Demas hath forsaken me."

The little home, far from resenting their pet horse being taken, were proud that he should go and fight for old England. Through the kindness of the remount officer, his mistress and her little girl heard that "Demas" had been drafted to Egypt. So at Christmas they sent the little parcel and their loving wishes, and hoped that by some miracle they might reach their dear old horse.

Now horses are bought by the thousand in war, and are drafted here and there, and entirely lose their identity, becoming only a number. But by some strange chance "Demas" stuck to his name, and wherever drafted he was not merely a number, but also "Demas." He was a nice horse, and well mannered, so it came about that he got selected to be a General Officer's charger, and that General Officer, General Prendergast, happened that very Christmas to be in Cairo.

Thus "Demas" got his sugar and biscuits, and wrote a letter thanking his big missus and his little missus in England, and said he would come back to them, after he had won the war. When they got this letter Joan and her mother were very glad, and so another letter, enclosing £5, went off, addressed to the soldier groom who looked after "Demas." Quite a short letter.

"DEAR SOLDIER,—

"Please be kind to Demas,

From JOAN."

In the spring of 1915, Sir Charles Melliss,¹ and his brigade, were waltzed off to Mesopotamia, much to their horror and dismay. But it so happened that Sir Charles arrived at Basra just in time to win a glorious victory over the Turks, and to earn his K.C.B. Our brigade was sent down to the Suez end of the Canal, to take over his section, and the morning after we had taken over, a curious adventure occurred. Between the posts, on the east bank of the Canal, as before explained, small patrols, consisting of one N.C.O. and three men, patrolled, meeting similar patrols from the next posts on each side.

Just as it was getting light one of these patrols, furnished

¹ Major-General Sir Charles Melliss, V.C., K.C.B.

by the 56th Rifles, was suddenly fired upon from some small sandhills which at that point stood on the bank. The Havildar (sergeant) and his party immediately took cover, and peered about to see what was up. They had not long to wait, for Turkish Enver hats began to peep over the sandhills. The Havildar at once grasped the situation, and behaved with great promptitude and bravery. One of his men was already hit, but he sent one of the remaining two back, to warn the nearest post. In front of him, and on the other side of the Turks, could be seen five ships approaching in complete ignorance of the trap they were running into. At immense risk, during which he was badly wounded, he managed to signal across the Canal to a Canal control post, and the control at once seeing that something was wrong, hastily warned the five ships to stop, which they did just in time.

Meanwhile the Havildar and his two men, all now wounded, kept up a rearguard action with the Turks, dragging themselves back yard by yard, towards their supports. These now hurried up, and the Turks, finding their ambush uncovered, beat a hasty retreat across the desert.

Then became revealed the full nature of the danger which the Havildar and his little party had averted. This was no small raiding party, but 500 Turkish infantry, and two guns, under a German General. They had come all the way from Beersheba, 175 miles away, and had with great skill escaped from the view of our scouting aircraft and mounted patrols. The intention was, with gun-fire to sink the first ship that passed, hoping the others would then foul it and thus hopelessly block the Canal. At the same time the infantry, at close range, would shoot down all those visible on board.

When Lord Kitchener, who was then War Secretary, received the telegram giving an account of this gallant little affair, he at once wired out that the Havildar was to be promoted from the ranks and given a commission, and also that he was to be decorated with the Indian Order of Merit. I took this news down to him in hospital, and he was for jumping out of bed at once and going round to tell all his friends what the Great War Lord had done for him.

The Admiral of the French Fleet was a charming gentleman, very popular with the English, whom he heartily admired, especially for their love of sport. He therefore bought

a set of golf clubs, and set to work to learn golf, requisitioning the most beautiful English lady in Suez to teach him. He also bought a skiff, in which he took strenuous rowing exercise. As it was very hot just then, he used to take his rowing exercise at crack of dawn, clothed only in a pair of bathing drawers. He was also unfortunately very deaf.

One morning soon after we had taken over the Suez section, the French Admiral decided to take his row up the Canal. Now there were very strict orders that no boats were allowed on the Canal, except those told off for the official use of officers of the Army, and of course, French and English naval boats. For we had to be careful about mine-layers.

The sentry on duty at the first post on the Canal, seeing a perfectly naked white man rowing for dear life into the sacred waters, naturally yelled to him to halt. But the Admiral, being deaf, did not hear him and rowed gaily on. The sentry challenged three times, and then let drive, mercifully missing the Admiral, who not hearing the shot, or noticing the splash of the bullet, continued on his pleasant way. The sentry, now concluding that he had to deal with some desperate character, pulled aside his cut-off, and let the Admiral have the contents of his magazine. Again a merciful Providence caused him to miss his moving mark, but this time he went so near the boat, that the splashes of the bullets caught the Admiral's eye.

He looked at them with some curiosity, thinking they were fish jumping, and then, glancing towards the bank, suddenly grasped the fact that a squad of men were just going to open fire on him. Stopping his skiff he turned, and rowing to the bank, cursed those Indian soldiers in the most fluent French, not one word of which could they understand.

Therefore whilst some of them covered the infuriated Admiral with their rifles, one was sent off at a run to fetch a British officer. He on his arrival at once discovered the mistake that had been made, and, offering the profusest apologies, saw the Admiral safely off, but little mollified.

The officer telephoned down to me, so I at once armed myself to the teeth, ordered out my launch, and hastened off to the French flagship. There I made the most humble apology for the mistake that had been made, which M. le Vicomte, with the utmost courtesy and good-humour, accepted. Thus an Anglo-Franco war was temporarily averted.

To make sure that this mistake did not occur again, an order was issued to that post, explicitly pointing out that if a white man, with no clothes on, and rowing a small boat came along, he was not to be fired at, as this was the French Admiral, which was the same as an English General.

A little more than a month later the flag-lieutenant, or secretary, of the French Admiral, boarded me before breakfast, and reported formally and coldly that another outrage, similar to the last, had been perpetrated on his chief. Macmullen, my staff captain, at once got on to the telephone and asked of the post commander his version of this regrettable affair. After much chat backwards and forwards it became apparent that when the post was relieved, as it had been the day before, the outgoing commander had failed to pass on the instructions regarding the immunity of the unclothed rower.

So the poor Admiral had again nearly been massacred, and again Anglo-French relations were nearly jeopardised. It cost me a large and expensive dinner with the two most beautiful ladies in Suez, one on each side of him, thoroughly to assuage the French Admiral.

The good God has always been kind to me in the matter of staff officers, and here in Egypt made no exception. Arthur Longhurst, a good clean English gentleman, very nice-looking, thereby simply devastating the French ladies, and wonderfully conscientious and hard-working, was the Brigade Major. He had also the most uncanny knack of catching bullets, and was twice severely wounded. Macmullen was a great big fellow, about 7 feet high, and with a brain of commensurate size. He was a captain then, but rose to be a brigadier during the war, and will doubtless be a Commander-in-Chief some day. He was a first-class staff officer, and I was sorry to lose him, but he had a chance of promotion up Dardanelles way, and gladly, yet with regret, we released him. His successor was G. H. Chapman, of the 53rd Sikhs, a rare good fellow and staff officer, of whom more anon when we get to Mesopotamia. The Indian regulations allowed me no A.D.C., so my poor staff officers had to do his job, as well as their own.

At Suez the Governor, curiously enough, was a Turk. He was one of those who clung to the old British connection, and disliked intensely the Young Turk party, and the German alliance. His invitation to lunch was thus worded—

" Khalil Riad Bey, Governor of Suez, shall be much obliged to Major-General Sir George Younghusband to kindly lunch with him to-morrow Sunday at 1 a.m. at his Residence.

"Suez, March 20, 1915.

R.I.P."

The initials at the end looked ominous, but were probably only meant to represent R.S.V.P.

The lunch was excellent, and with coffee came some very nice cigarettes, just the quality we all search for. Knowing Eastern etiquette, where it is not good manners to express admiration for anything or anybody, unless you mean it as a blunt hint that you wish to be presented with the article in question, I nevertheless apparently showed too clearly that these cigarettes were to my taste. My courteous host begged me to fill my cigarette case with them, but with equal courtesy I excused myself.

That afternoon, as we were having tea down at our headquarters on the Canal, at Port Tewfik, a state carriage, to which were harnessed two superb white Arab horses, with two outriders in front and two outriders behind, drew up before our humble war abode. Out of the carriage stepped a gorgeous being bearing a little box. It was a box of cigarettes from the Governor of Suez. The courtesy of the old-fashioned Turk is difficult to match in the world.

There is a funny class of persons who somehow or other have got obsessed with the idea that by securing an enormous number of coloured ribbons, which are sewn to his uniform coat, he thereby enhances his military prestige. In days when a certain coloured ribbon denoted that it had been earned at the mouth of the cannon, so to speak, there was just a modest soldier pride in being authorised to wear it. But when, commencing in the Wolseley era; medals and ribbons were distributed with a lavish hand, even to the saloon stewards on a transport which may not have been within 200 miles of a bullet, decent soldiers became a little wary of indiscriminate distributions.

In the Great War, however, the floodgates were opened as never before, and it was then a curious, and really rather amusing sight, to observe the ever-increasing rows of medal ribbons, on the breasts of the professional hunter. And these bold collectors were not always comparatively junior officers,

who wished to impress their girls, at the Carlton or Rupelmeyer's, with their remarkable heroism. Some officers of the highest rank also conceived an insatiable mania for accumulating perfectly valueless decorations. Unhappily, or perhaps fortunately, the last-joined subaltern can at a Levée, for instance, immediately distinguish between the salt and the sand. It is even whispered that from the vicinity of the Throne itself some not very complimentary comment was made on these over-decorated heroes.

Probably few of us, during the war, who happened when on business or pleasure to be passing the time of day at the War Office, or the India Office, have not seen sacks, literally sacks, of foreign decorations, for which the harassed officials were at their wits' ends to find reasonably presentable recipients. When all else failed the last few sacks were sent off to the uttermost ends of the world for distribution. Thus it might happen that an officer in East Africa suddenly found that he had earned the eternal gratitude of the Serbian nation ; whilst another equally innocent officer, in Mesopotamia or China, was faced with the fact that he had earned undying fame in Roumania. An entirely blameless person, serving at Murmansk or Archangel, might find himself suddenly engulfed by the Order of the Nile.

The disease was one which had spread from Germany, where it existed in a particularly virulent form from 1870 onwards. In the Fatherland might be seen officers, with rows of decorations, though by no possible chance could they have been near a battle in their lives.

One night, several years before the war, when dining at King Edward VII's table, I noticed that one of the royal footmen had on several decorations, and asked Lord Marcus Beresford, who was sitting next me, what he had got them for. Lord Marcus, with commendable brevity, replied—

“ Got 'em, for ? Why, handing potatoes to the German Emperor.”

So apparently the Kaiser was one of the chief agents in introducing this infectious disorder.

Happily, however, it can easily be recovered from, because there is now no order obliging anyone to wear decorations which he may consider valueless. They can therefore be quietly but firmly dropped at will ; and this is probably the

remedy which most sensible people will adopt, when the original ribbons are worn out.

One day at Suez rather a tragic affair occurred. The head of the Egyptian C.I.D. came to me, and said that a very important prisoner had been captured. There was at the time great suspicion that German, or Turkish, spies were moving about in Egypt, and that some of these were disguised as British officers. On the mail train from Cairo to Suez that day, there was a passenger who at once attracted the attention of a detective, whose duty it was to travel by it.

This suspected person was dressed in the uniform of a British staff officer, and wore on his shoulders the badges of a Lieutenant-Colonel. But the detective noticed he wore a pink shirt, an article which no British officer had ever been known to wear in uniform. Also he had long and rather untidy hair, which also was not the hall-mark of a British Lieutenant-Colonel.

On the way down the detective had kept a close but unobtrusive watch on this suspicious person, and he had noticed that he kept on looking out of the window, and making notes, and that he had with him a small attaché case, which he clung to remorselessly, even carrying it into the lavatory with him. Therefore on arrival at Suez, the detective, having wired on his suspicions, had the gentleman with the pink shirt arrested, and in spite of his heated objections, conveyed to the local police station.

The prisoner demanded that the General Officer Commanding should be informed, and this request the police promptly complied with, doubtless counting on the added glory of a brass hat or two at the execution. One of my staff officers went down to the gaol, and what was his astonishment to find that the prisoner was none other than Sir Mark Sykes, M.P.! Needless to say, Sir Mark Sykes dined with me that night. But he solemnly registered a vow to cut his hair, and never to wear a pink shirt in uniform again.

In July, 1915, I was granted three days' leave to Port Said, and arrived there at eleven o'clock at night. On the platform was a staff officer, who came up and asked if I was General Younghusband. I said I was. He replied—

“ You have to go straight back to Suez, sir, where you will

find a man-of-war waiting for you, and you may take one staff officer with you."

"Man-of-war waiting for me? What on earth for?"

"Haven't a notion, sir. Here is the telegram from Cairo."

The telegram merely contained the few words already communicated.

"Napoleon being shipped off to St. Helena?"

The staff officer smiled sadly. He did not know. There was a train back in a few hours. So, travelling by this, I reached Suez that afternoon, and found H.M.S. *Philomel*, under Captain Hall-Thompson, waiting for me.

Going on board I asked Hall-Thompson what was up. Hall-Thompson did not know. All he knew was that he had been ordered to take me and a staff officer to Aden, and that the Turks were there encamped on the golf-links!

Before sailing, however, Lord Denbigh arrived from Cairo, carrying a special despatch from Sir John Maxwell. He also explained the situation by word of mouth. It appeared that a strong force of Turks, under Saiad Pasha, had approached Aden, and that the British garrison had sallied forth to attack him. The Turks were however too strong, and the garrison had to fall back, and take shelter behind its fortifications. The Turks had then advanced, and were closely investing Aden, from the land side. The garrison was very weak, and a call had been made on Egypt for reinforcements.

Sir John Maxwell is one of those men who can think big and act quickly. At the time the only formed and experienced body of troops he had in Egypt was my brigade. For Sir Herbert Cox had gone off to the Dardanelles, and Sir Charles Melliss to Mesopotamia. His ration strength was quite imposing, but that had little relation to his fighting strength, for in the former were included thousands of sick and wounded, and thousands of men passing through to the Dardanelles and elsewhere. But Sir John took the broad view. The Turks were fully occupied in the Dardanelles, and therefore not likely to make any immediate advance from Palestine direction; whilst he counted on being able to hold off the Sennussi, who was threatening the western frontier of Egypt, with such units as he could from time to time lay hands on.

The decision was a big one, but having arrived at it, Sir John put the matter through with characteristic promptitude.

He got the Admiral to send me off to Aden, at once, in the *Philomel*; and then proceeded to commandeer passing ships, had them unloaded, packed the brigade on board them, and shot them off after us. He also denuded himself of two horse artillery batteries, "A" battery of the Honourable Artillery Company, and the Notts and Derbyshire Horse Artillery battery.

In the Navy apparently it is the custom when a senior officer, whether soldier or sailor, is being carried as an official passenger, for the Captain to give up his own cabin to him. I was perfectly horrified to find that Hall-Thompson had turned out of his quarters, and that my things were installed in them. I beseeched him to come back and anyway share the quarters, but he said he was quite comfortable up in the chart-room, on the bridge, and insisted on my staying where I was. Also, in accordance with Admiralty instructions, the Captain has to arrange to feed the official passenger, or passengers, they paying him so much a day to cover the cost. Apparently the higher your rank the more you are expected to eat and drink; in my case I think it was £2 worth a day, whilst Longhurst had to jog along on 10s. of sustenance only a day. As a matter of fact, we both fed alike at the Captain's table, and exceedingly well we fared. Hall-Thompson was always pressing us to drink champagne and other expensive liquors, or he said he would be making a fortune out of us. But the Red Sea in July is no place for strong drinks. The Captain's servant was an old Marine who was a first-class cook, and who not only cooked the food, but insisted on serving it himself. He would allow no one else to serve his Captain.

The heat being intense, the bluejackets were allowed to go about in white cotton shorts and thin jerseys. Round the leg of each below the knee might be observed a leather strap, which at first sight looked like a wrist watch. On enquiry we found that this was the sailor's purse. He was always paid in golden sovereigns, war or no war, and kept his savings thus. Nothing would induce him to put his money in the ship's safe, which was allowable, and urged on him.

No, he said, if the ship was wrecked and he saved, he had his money with him, and if he was drowned, it mattered nothing either way. If, however, his money was in the Admiralty safe, and the ship went down, whilst he himself was saved, his money

was lost ; for the Admiralty does not hold itself responsible for money thus lost.

Bluejackets are wonderfully light of foot ; they all go about barefooted, and you see them jump down 5 or 6 feet on to the deck, and alight as lightly as a cat, scarcely making a sound. Occasionally, however, you would hear a thump, and any bluejacket near would mutter " Soldier ! " All soldiers were deemed to be heavy-footed, as indeed they are compared to bluejackets. The men at whom this term of reproach was thrown were bluejacket reservists, who had lost their spring and lightness in shore billets.

Arrived at Aden we found the situation much as had been described, and the Turks, if not literally on the golf-links, were holding positions close alongside them. Moreover, at Sheikh Othman, just across the harbour, they were within easy artillery range of the port buildings, ships, residential quarters, Club, Government House, and ships in harbour. At Steamer Point we had some forts, in which heavy guns were mounted, but these all pointed out to sea, and the emplacements were so made that they could not be slued round, so as to shoot inland. For never, in the wildest pre-war dreams of anyone, had an organised attack from the Arabian mainland been contemplated.

There was nothing much to be done till the troops from Egypt arrived, which they did a few days later. When I took over the Governorship at Aden the command of the Frontier Force Brigade devolved upon Colonel A. M. S. Elsmie, of the 56th Rifles, and to him was entrusted the task of knocking the Turks out of Sheik Othman, and their positions close to Aden. The transports from Egypt came in one by one, looking like unobtrusive ocean tramps, which indeed they were in ordinary times. Also quite unobtrusively they landed their troops up the harbour behind an island, out of sight of the Turks. I don't think they had the foggiest notion that any reinforcements had arrived.

Directly all was ready, which was only a matter of hours, Elsmie took his force out, after nightfall, and just before dawn attacked, and completely routed the Turks, driving them back 14 miles to Lahej. There they remained impotent for the rest of the war, and finally capitulated at the end of it. Unfortunately we had no cavalry, bar a few sabres of the Aden troop, or we might have rounded up the lot there and then.

By fortifying and garrisoning Sheikh Othman, Aden was made perfectly safe from the land side, and the head of the waterworks was made secure. I forgot to mention that when the Turks shut us off the golf-links, they at the same time cut off the whole water-supply of Aden. A very serious matter, for in addition to the garrison and the European residents, there were some 40,000 Asiatics, mostly Indians, in the city of Aden, which is within the fortified area. There were also a large number of animals, horses, camels, cows, and goats, which required much water.

When the water-supply was cut off my predecessor, General David Shaw, very promptly dealt with this alarming situation. He ordered a lot of ships in harbour to condense water. This apparently they managed by going full speed astern with their engines, whilst securely anchored by the bows. He thus supplied a ration of a quart or so of water a day per head of the population. The Turks, who are often very decent people, had not during their occupation damaged the headworks, so we soon got the supply flowing again when Sheikh Othman was recaptured.

One of the leading merchants in Aden city did a very foolish thing soon after the Turks had been driven off. He had apparently been in regular correspondence with Saiad Pasha, sending him useful information. These letters he entrusted to the Arab camel-drivers, who, running the gauntlet of the Turks, brought in supplies to us from the mainland, whither they returned after nightfall with their empty camels for more supplies. One of these, who had a letter from the merchant to Saiad Pasha, noticed that at the postern gate the camels had to pass in single file, and that each camel-driver was carefully searched.

He therefore had a panic, and rightly so, for he would have been in an awkward predicament if the letter had been found on him. He therefore slipped out of the queue, and, going back to where he had noticed a red pillar-box, popped the letter in.

Whether he thought that our postal department regularly delivered letters to the enemy, or whether he thought that the posts were out of work in war time, and the pillar-box merely a pillar of oblivion, is not known. What happened was that, when the pillar-box was cleared next morning, all letters in it

were in due course, taken to Colonel Cleveland, the postal censor. With them of course went the letter intended for Saiad Pasha. In the envelope was found a complete and accurate plan of Aden, giving all the defences and positions of all the guns. Also were marked in red ink the exact ranges from various points on the mainland to important buildings and forts in Aden, such as Government House, the Club, the hospitals, and the forts on Steamer Point.

Included also was a letter, giving general information, and ending up with the intimation that Saiad Pasha owed the writer Rs. 100 for previous information supplied, and that another Rs. 100 was due for the present effort. The letter was signed and we had no difficulty in running down the writer. He was tried by court martial, found guilty, and had to face a firing party on the ramparts next morning. It was thought advisable to order a party of the leading citizens to be present at the execution, *pour encourager les autres*. Which it did, for we had no more trouble that way.

The men of "A" Battery, of the Honourable Artillery Company, were victims of a curious disease. It was a sort of virulent eczema, all over the body, and appeared to be contagious, for practically the whole battery got it. They had therefore to be segregated, and were placed on a spacious jetty, which ran out into the harbour. On the jetty were large empty warehouses, in which the men could live. The only approach to the jetty was by a gate, where a sentry was posted.

The heat was intense, and the irritation caused to the skin by wearing clothes, even of the thinnest, was so great that the men preferred to go about stark naked. This mattered not at all, as they were quite out of view from anywhere except the sea. Now in Aden were some very kind ladies who had the dispensing of "comforts," which came from home and from India, for the troops. Hearing, therefore, that there were some sick soldiers on the aforesaid jetty, they thought it only kind to take down to them cigarettes, chocolate, and other comforts.

It so happened that it never occurred to them to mention their kindly intentions beforehand to the staff, or to the medical officers. They just hired a carriage, and taking with them a goodly supply of cigarettes, etc., drove down to the jetty,

which was a couple of miles up the harbour. Arrived there they sailed past the sentry, who was so flabbergasted that he failed to stop them. But immediately, seeing them heading for the open warehouses, he yelled a warning to his comrades—

“ There’s some ladies coming ! ”

Indeed those nearest had seen the peril and at once raised the alarm, as none of them were, as before suggested, in a fit state to receive ladies. With commendable promptitude the whole battery thereupon made one wild stampede into the sea alongside and thus clothed themselves with waves. There, with the water up to their necks, they warmly thanked the kind ladies, and asked them to leave their gifts on the wharf. This was done, and the ladies departed, thinking they had merely chanced accidentally across a bathing parade. The full tragedy was only revealed to them later.

Aden is not a very popular station, rather the reverse, but there is one person who has no cause for complaint, and that is the Governor, or Resident as he is called. He has a fine big house, perched on Steamer Point, where the sea-breezes blow in from every side, and do their best to keep him cool. He gets a large salary, or did when I was there, some £3,500 a year, and has a host of servants found him by the State. A state carriage and pair of horses, a barge with eight sailors, and during the war, at any rate, two motor-cars were kept up free of charge by the State.

He had also another ancient privilege, by courtesy of the P. & O. Company. Whenever a mail-boat came in, his A.D.C. went on board, and bought out of cold storage, at English prices, such delicacies as the purser could spare. As there are no vegetables in Aden this was a great boon, and always at Government House was given a big dinner party on mail night, so that as many officers and their wives as possible might participate in this treat. Fried soles, English mutton or beef or game, ham, lettuces, potatoes, and other rare luxuries, were rare treats in those parts.

Sir John Maxwell must have become impatient at our long delay, indeed we had been away two months, on this Aden venture. So regiments came from India, in sufficient numbers to make this very important port and coaling station secure, and we received orders to go back to Egypt.

Aden is a great coaling station, with immense reserves of

coal, and in the early days of the war fears were expressed that German raiders might come in and burn the lot. The coal is piled in huge stacks at various points along the harbour face. It occurred to me, one brainy day, to wonder how the Germans, if they got the chance, were going to set about making a bonfire of this coal. So as an experiment we thought we would try to set alight one of these huge stacks. In case we should be successful, we had all the fire engines in the place ready on the spot to put out the flames.

It may seem strange, but try how we might, and in every variety of way we could think of, we failed miserably. We succeeded in lighting a small fire, large enough to boil an egg, and that sort of thing, after a great deal of coaxing, and the use of much wood and kerosine oil ; but as for setting the stack alight the attempt was a dismal failure. Perhaps the sailors have some patent plan of their own.

Chapman, who was now my Staff Captain, and I were ordered to go back to Egypt by P. & O. mail-boat. As all movements of individual officers, as well as troops, were kept secret, the P. & O. Agent at Bombay was merely told to be prepared to take on board at Aden an exalted person. The Agent, not knowing how exalted he might be, took no chances. He had, by knocking several cabins into one, a most magnificent suite prepared, comprising a bedroom, sitting-room, bathroom, lavatory and baggage-room.

Every soul in Aden seemed to have come to see us off, and as it was 2 p.m., on a remarkably sultry day, this was exceedingly nice of them. When this not at all exalted officer stepped on board, some sort of special flag was run up to the foremast, and as we steamed out of harbour all the men-of-war turned out their guards, and blew off bugles and other wind instruments.

And so back to the land of the Pharaohs.

CHAPTER XV

THE MESOPOTAMIAN TRAGEDY

WHEN we arrived back in Egypt we were sent to the northern section of the Canal, with Kantara as headquarters, and rumours were rife that we were to be used for a venture up the Palestine coast. Some such move had long been contemplated, but the Dardanelles operation had naturally used up all available troops.

Being asked to write what in military parlance is known as an "appreciation" of the strategic situation, I made so bold as to point out that the best way of defending Egypt was not by sitting on the Suez Canal, but by cutting in on to the Turkish long line of communications, which ran down the length of Syria and Palestine. This line was very vulnerable if attacked by a power which had command of the sea, as we had.

In the early days of the war, if we had cut in at Mersina or Alexandretta, not only would all threat of an invasion of Egypt have been removed, but the ghastly campaign in Mesopotamia would have been avoided, for no Turks could have moved out of Asia Minor.

Meanwhile I and my Staff very nearly came by our deaths at Port Said, and not by shot or shell. Port Said was in my section, and the orders were that I should spend two or three days there in each week. We usually went there Saturday and remained till Monday. On this particular Sunday we had a light breakfast of *café au lait* and rolls at our hotel, and then went over the Canal to inspect the Armenian refugees' camp.

We got back about eleven o'clock, and then both Chapman and I were taken violently ill, with exactly the same symptoms as those of Asiatic cholera. Chapman was so bad indeed that I saw him being carried out at 4 p.m., his face a ghastly blueish white, and the doctor told us afterwards that he thought he would be dead before he reached hospital.

After four days, however, we were both out of danger and rapidly recovered. Unhappily during our illness no one seems to have got promptly on to the causes thereof, and when they did, handled the case in what we thought a singularly inept manner. The first thing discovered was that the milk given us with our coffee was strongly impregnated with arsenic. How did it get there? That also was traced. The cows which supplied the milk, belonged to a Bulgarian, and the milk was brought in a large covered can to the hotel by a Turk. There was an Austrian maid in the hotel who had the handling of or anyway access to it. One of these three, or someone with their connivance, had put enough arsenic into the can of milk to kill a regiment. And the reason it did not kill us was a kindly interposition of Providence.

Apparently one of the kitchen hands, not in the conspiracy, found he had half a pail of milk over from the day before which was still quite good; so being a thrifty soul, instead of throwing it away, he poured it into the poisoned milk. This addition weakened the solution, so that instead of being killed we were only made exceedingly ill.

Having this conclusive chain of evidence it might be thought that the Bulgar, Turk and Austrian would have been hanged from three neighbouring trees. Not at all: they were all let off. The Austrian maid was sent to the internment camp at Malta, and the Bulgar and Turk shoo-ed off somewhere. When we enquired the reason of this lenient treatment, we were told that there were great complications. Egypt was not British territory, but under the Sultan of Egypt; this was a civil, not a military crime; it would have to be tried in an Egyptian court; and so on and so forth. The final conclusion being that it was better to hush the matter up.

The Armenian camp which we had visited that morning, and which at first was under grave suspicion as regards the poisoning, was really a wonderful achievement. The French, in one of their fits of enthusiasm, had gone up the coast, and from Alexandretta or thereabouts taken on board 5,000 Armenian refugees. These, instead of being taken somewhere, Algiers for instance, where the French themselves could look after them, were dumped down at Port Said for the British to feed and nourish.

We had enough troubles of our own, but Sir John Maxwell

at once accepted the responsibility. He sent down from Cairo a large number of tents, lately vacated by the Australians, in charge of the only available officer, Major Pearson, R.E., and ordered him to pitch a camp on the east bank of the Canal, just below Port Said, and to lay on a pipe water-supply and electric lighting. This miracle Major Pearson, aided by Major Elgood, the Port Cominandant, and a most excellent officer, effected in about three days, the drinking water and electric wires being carried in pipes laid in the bed of the Canal to the other bank.

The Armenians could speak no language known to any of us, so Major Pearson invented a scheme for feeding them without words. The camp was beautifully laid out, with broad roads which divided it into squares. In each square were pitched twenty-five tents, and each square had a flag of a different colour. An exact miniature plan of the camp, about the size of two tennis courts, was then laid out, and this was divided up into squares exactly corresponding with those in the camp. Each of these little squares had a flag of the same colour as that flown in the corresponding square in camp.

At a fixed hour daily, baskets containing the rations for each square of tents were placed on the miniature squares in the miniature plan of the camp. A bugle was then sounded and representatives from each square of tents came to their corresponding flag, took their baskets and distributed the contents to their tent fellows. Then they returned the empty baskets to be filled for the next meal.

Electric lights were fixed up everywhere. Besides taps for drinking water, shower baths and bathing places were provided both for men and women. Children's schools were started, with compulsory attendance; whilst the women were set to work at lace making, at which they are expert. The young men, 600 in number, were employed in military training, and the old men performed the fatigue duties about camp.

One of our patrols, marching along the railway line one morning, picked up a characteristic sample of German propaganda. It was a bundle containing many dozen copies of a picture, which one of their agents must have thrown out of the night mail from Cairo. The picture was a reproduction of a painting by a Russian artist made some seventy

years ago, just after the Indian Mutiny. It depicts Indians being blown from guns.

Prisoners certainly were blown from guns during the quelling of the Mutiny, but not the patriarchal civilians here depicted. Those thus executed were mutineer sepoy, who had been tried by courts-martial and convicted of the most horrible crimes, such as the murdering of English women and children, and the like. They were ordered to be blown from guns instead of simply being shot, from reasons of policy and as a wholesome warning, which as a matter of fact served its purpose.

This picture was thrown broadcast amongst the Egyptian peasantry, and the accompanying letterpress deliberately inferred that the occurrence depicted was a recent one, and professed to show how the English treated their prisoners in the Great War. The Germans are extraordinarily thick-headed and ignorant about Eastern psychology, or they might have known that such a picture was very likely to have exactly the opposite effect to what was desired. And so it happened. The Egyptian fellah, when he saw this picture, said—

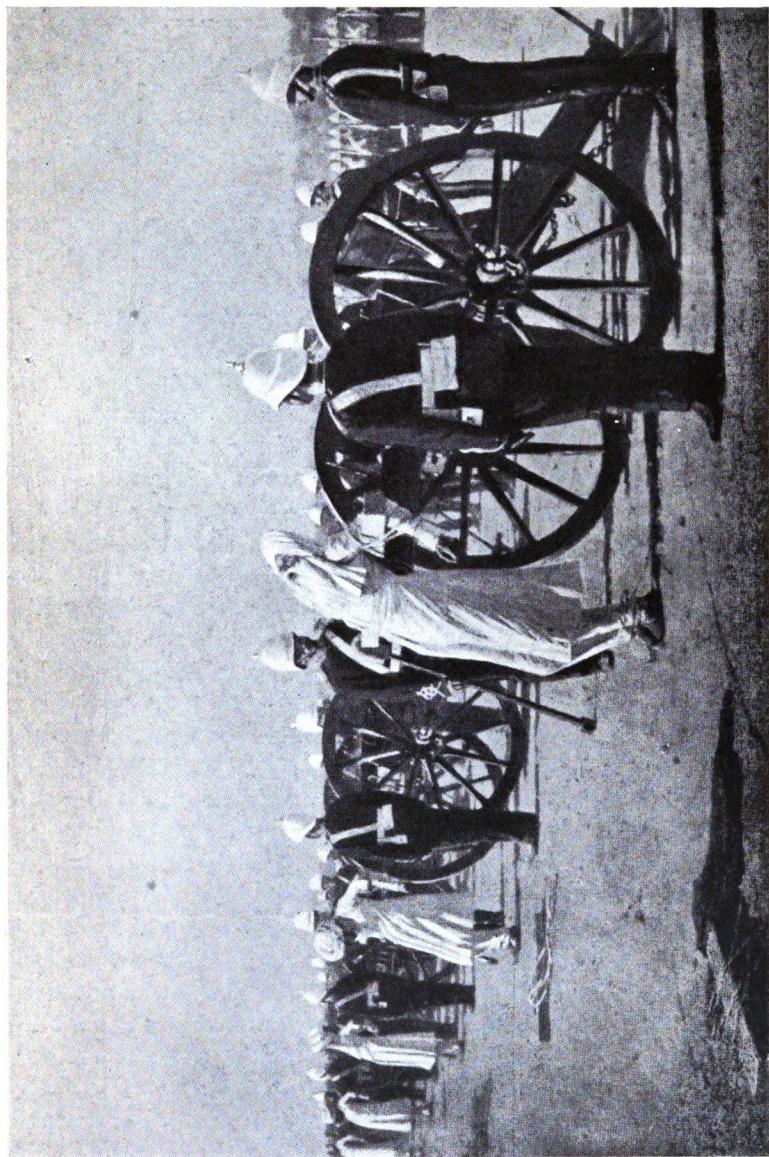
“What fearsome and mighty people the English must be. By the grace of God, I will remain friendly with them, for I have no wish to be blown from a gun.”

Whilst we were indulging in ambitious dreams of a raid on Mersina, or Alexandretta, or even of getting to France to relieve a tired brigade, the bomb fell. We, like Melliss and his brigade, were ordered off to Mesopotamia! I don’t think any of us had contemplated this awful catastrophe. We thought that, having been brought back from Aden, we were safe.

I have never known such intense gloom settle on a body of soldiers, as it did on us when that order came. Perhaps, subconsciously, we all felt a foreboding of the horrible experiences that awaited us in that accursed land. My own health was none too good, and Sir John Maxwell would have kept me in Egypt, but it did not seem quite cricket to stop behind whilst the others went. So we set to work and made up wonderful plans for spending Christmas in Baghdad, and generally cheered up ourselves and each other.

In due course we set sail on our new venture, very sad to leave Egypt. It was very gentlemanly campaigning there, and Sir John Maxwell was a General after our own hearts.

One day as, Eastward bound, we were passing Aden afar



A PART OF THE GERMAN PROPAGANDA IN EGYPT DURING THE GREAT WAR TO SHOW
THE WAY INDIANS WERE TREATED BY THE BRITISH.

It is taken from an old Russian picture painted soon after the Mutiny of 1857.

off, rather a quaint tragedy occurred. The 51st Sikhs were on board our transport, and by some mistake, in the dim early morning, the cook to one of the company messes mistook a bag of tobacco for a bag of tea, and taking large handfuls of it made the morning tea of the Sikhs with tobacco. This they proceeded to drink, and had all committed themselves deeply before the error was discovered. Now tobacco, in any form or shape, is taboo to a Sikh, indeed a Sikh orderly will sometimes make a great fuss if told to fetch a cigar case, or tobacco pouch, for his Sahib. To smoke, or even to have any passing dealings with tobacco, is as much against his religion as cutting his hair and beard.

When this awful thing happened, a deputation was sent, asking whether those who had sinned might be allowed to hold a purification service on the forecastle. Permission being granted and the forecastle temporarily cleared, they all sat down thereon in solemn conclave. For quite a long time we could see them haranguing each other, and having quite a nice little debate. After an hour or two there was a general rising, and salaaming, and smiles of satisfaction. As a result of the conclave, we were informed they had fined themselves Rs. 300, for the deadly sin committed! I think it not improbable that their priest pocketed the fine.

The origin of the embargo laid on tobacco by the Sikh religion has a purely military origin. In some old war, a body of Sikh horsemen was passing through a village, and as is the Eastern custom, jumped off their horses to take a puff in turn at the hookah, which is hospitably placed for any passer-by to take a pull at. On this particular occasion the enemy happened to charge this body of Sikhs whilst off their horses, and slaughtered them to a man. The chief military commander thereupon issued an order, that no soldiers were to smoke on the line of march. And this order got gradually drafted into the semi-military religious code of the Sikhs. A Sikh may drink as much as he likes, any wine or spirit, but he may not smoke. A Mahomedan, on the other hand, by the laws of the Prophet, may smoke as much as he likes, but he may drink no wine or spirits.

In due course we arrived at Basra, and then our troubles began. It was sometime in the afternoon when we arrived, and arrangements were made to shift us, without landing,

straight on to a small steamer, which had been commandeered from the Irrawaddy River in Burmah. Gorringe¹ came on board and told us that Nixon² had taken a bit of a knock at Ctesiphon, not many miles from Baghdad, and was falling back. It was therefore necessary to hurry us up as a reinforcement.

The 51st Sikhs, and my Staff, had comfortably filled a good-sized ocean liner, but we had now to be compressed into a little river steamer, such as used to be seen plying up and down the Thames, flying the L.C.C. flag. High and low, we were all perforce deck passengers, packed like sardines. After dark we pushed off up-stream, driving into a bitterly cold northern wind. Having just come from hot weather conditions in Egypt and Aden, and being therefore lightly clad, we naturally felt the cold intensely, and suffered accordingly. For seven days and nights we underwent this purgatory, and were none the fitter for it.

A day or so before we reached Al Gharbi, which was our destination, Sir John Nixon's steamer, coming down-stream, passed us, and both ships tied up so that I might go on board and get orders.

Sir John was in good heart. He said he had made a bid, with small means, for a great prize, which was Baghdad. He had failed for the moment, but would make another bid when reinforcements arrived. He added that if no British General had ever taken big risks, names like Plassey would not be on our colours.

I was to collect my brigade at Al Gharbi, and there hold out a hand to the cavalry brigade which Townshend³ was sending back. Townshend himself, with his infantry and artillery, was remaining at Kut, pending the resumption of the offensive. This could not take place for two months with any chance of success, as the Indian Army Corps from France could not be placed effectively in the field in less time.

This conversation took place towards the middle of December. What therefore was our surprise and dismay, a few days later, at receiving orders to advance on January 1. Whoever gave that order, or was responsible for its being given, made a

¹ Now Lieutenant-General Sir George Gorringe, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.

² General Sir John Nixon, K.C.B.

³ Major-General Sir Charles Townshend, K.C.B.

very grave mistake. This premature advance was responsible for all the tragedies which followed each other during the next four months. Sir John Nixon considered that two months at least were required to prepare for a new advance, yet with nothing ready we were ordered to march in a fortnight. The reason for this unreadiness is easily explained.

At the beginning of the Great War an Indian Army Corps, under Sir James Willcocks, efficiently equipped, was sent to France. It served there for a year and was then sent back East. Those who despatched it from France were probably unaware that this Army Corps was required for immediate service in another theatre. They doubtless thought it was merely being shipped across to Egypt, there to rest, and effect any reorganisation required.

It was despatched therefore without a Corps Commander, or the Corps Staff. The ships were loaded more as ferry boats, each carrying such troops, guns, hospitals, etc., as were first to hand and fitted in, and not systematically, that is so as to land as portions of an Army Corps organised for immediate service.

It would be out of place here to go into intricate military details, but anyone can, for instance, plainly understand that it would be unwise to ship thousands of men with their rifles, but with no ammunition. Or batteries of artillery with the guns on one ship and the horses on another. Or the personnel of the hospitals without their ambulances and medicines. Not that it is meant to state that those actual mistakes were made, though some were equally grotesque, but merely to illustrate that an Army Corps, unless shipped in an organised manner, takes a long time to get sorted out on disembarkation.

The Army Corps from France arrived in some such dishevelled condition as the above suggests, so that it would take some considerable time before it could usefully pull its weight. But we were not even allowed to wait for this Army Corps. My old brigade, splendidly reinforced by the good old Leicestershire Regiment, in place of the 5th Gurkhas, and two hastily raised brigades of Indian troops, were pushed off up the banks of the Tigris towards Kut, and the relief of Townshend.

Sir John Nixon's health broke down soon after Ctesiphon, and he was succeeded by Sir Percy Lake, Chief of the Staff in India, who was sent to hold the breach till the War Office

supplied someone from France, or elsewhere, with experience during the Great War. But nobody wanted to go to Mesopotamia, so that Sir Percy remained in command for many months, till his health broke down, and a man on the spot, Sir Stanley Maude, was selected to succeed him.

It is wonderful how little touches tell. We were spending Christmas on the Tigris, and none of us were really very happy, and some of us were ill. Nor was there very much of Christmas fare. But away in Bombay was a very kind lady with a heart of gold. And this kind lady, with that sort of second sight, and far feeling sympathy which mere men seldom have, seemed to foresee what our Christmas would be. She therefore used her influence, which happily was great, for she was Lady Willingdon, to ensure that the Christmas presents, which she and other ladies in India sent for us, should reach us.

This was no easy task, for river boats were few and the strain on them great, but she was quite right when she insisted, that at that particular moment, these happy and kindly reminders that we were not forgotten by our dear women folk, were worth more than bags of barley, or even crates of shells.

Thus on Christmas morning arrived, and were issued, plum puddings for all. And it was not these, which were excellent, alone that helped, but the thought that kind hearts far overseas had us in mind and memory. But perhaps what touched us most was a little Christmas Card, which accompanied each parcel. It was just a simple little card, which on an ordinary Christmas Day at home would have seemed quite unremarkable. But there on the Tigris, that tragic winter, it hit the tender cord that bound us, far and near, together.

“Our thoughts and our prayers are with you.”

I saw one young giant, now gone where all good soldiers go, with his eyes brimming over, as he sat on the Tigris bank with the little card before him. And I don’t mind saying that I felt that way myself, and blessed Lady Willingdon, and have kept that card ever since.

Now the first requisite in a campaign of this sort is to have land transport, as well as river transport. Otherwise the troops are tied to the river, and have no power of manœuvre. The Turks, we knew, were from lack of land transport so tied to the river. They could, therefore, hold only positions

astride the river, stretching at most perhaps a couple of miles each side, and very often with one or both flanks in the air. The obvious plan for defeating a force so tied, is to march round one or both flanks ; but such marches cannot be undertaken without land transport. We had none.

Another essential for such an advance as was being undertaken were pontoons, so that floating bridges could be thrown across the river, thus enabling the General in Command to transfer his forces rapidly from one bank to the other, as the tactical situation might require. We had one bridge, composed of all sorts and conditions of ramshackle country boats. It was most infirm in the calmest weather, and when used with the utmost care, but which broke, or sank, when it was subject to any strain from wind, flood water, or the passage of troops.

It is equally essential, before attempting a venture of this sort, that adequate arrangements exist for the care of the sick and wounded, and for their conveyance from the battlefield to well-organised hospitals. No adequate arrangements, or ambulances or hospitals sufficient for our needs existed.

Soldiers cannot fight unless they are properly fed, and are saved as much as possible from the rigours of the climate by being adequately clothed and sheltered. Owing to the paucity of river boats it was impossible to give the men full rations, and often they were half starved. The only means of carrying their kits and small comforts were these same river boats, and it was only now and again that they could, during an advance, get at them.

In command of this forlorn hope was sent a very gallant soldier, Sir Fenton Aylmer, V.C., whom we met in a former chapter, doing a deed of great bravery on the Panjkora River.¹ As before mentioned, the Corps Staff had remained in France. So Sir Fenton had to get together a scratch Staff drawn from such units as could spare officers.

With brave hearts, and determined to do their best, the troops on January 3 set forth. I had been promoted to be a Divisional commander, with no Staff but such as could be collected, and with the three brigades before mentioned. But Fate was again kind to me and produced out of the blue two excellent Staff officers, none better. One was Elsmie,² who somehow got

¹ See page 142. ² Now Major-General A. M. S. Elsmie, C.B., C.M.G.

dispossessed of the Frontier Force Brigade, which was given to Kemball ; and the other was Costello,¹ most kindly lent me by Gorringe. What I owe to those two fine fellows I can never sufficiently express. Elsmie was one of the cleverest officers in the Army, and a skilled Staff officer of the highest brand. What he went through in those first few weeks was enough to kill half a dozen Staff officers. But he was always cool and collected, with his brain clear, and tireless.

Costello, who had won the Victoria Cross some few years before on the Malakand Pass, was not only first class at his job, but was one of those heavenly persons who keep their eyes fixed on the silver lining of the blackest cloud. He was always serene, always cheerful, and always, even at the darkest moments, saw the bright light beyond.

Those two had, and have, my admiration and affection, though I am afraid I very inadequately expressed it at the time.

We marched up the river, one brigade, the old Frontier Force Brigade, now under Kemball,² on the right bank, and the two other new brigades on the left bank. In between, two or three river boats carried our food and kits and a few medical necessities. We were told to march to Sheikh Said, about 15 miles up-stream, where the Turks were in position, and reconnoitre it. Having no cavalry, or aeroplanes, or other means of reconnoitring, and the country being as flat as a billiard table, the only way of reconnoitring the Turks was to march on, till we bumped into them.

This the Frontier Force Brigade did, and after a sharp fight established themselves in the Turkish front line trenches. Then came nightfall, and the devil's tattoo. Such firing never was heard. We thought the whole Turkish army was swarming on to our little force. It proved, however, not to be a counter attack, but just to ward off any night attack we might think of making.

Next morning Sir Fenton Aylmer came up, bringing a couple of weak brigades, the vanguard of the Army Corps from France, and a battery or two of artillery. He now took over command, and with the reinforcements he had brought tried a push up the left bank. But the Turks were heavily en-

¹ Now Brigadier-General E. W. Costello, V.C., C.M.G., C.V.O., D.S.O.

² Now Major-General Sir George Kemball, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

trenched, and there was not a scrap of cover, so night fell before much progress had been made.

Then down came the rain and a bitter north wind sprang up. These attacks on both banks, made perforce across the dead open, had cost us heavily. Nothing compared to losses in France, but with this difference—we had no reserves, and very inadequate hospital arrangements. That night on the banks of the Tigris, in pouring rain and with an icy wind blowing, without a great-coat or a blanket, on the cold wet slush lay 2,300 wounded.

Doing their best for these, all night long, were five splendid medical officers and one equally splendid padre, short of everything. Short even of bandages. On the boat, which was my headquarters, we took as many as could possibly find room, and all the food and stores in our little mess were distributed. The only really successful people that day were the Frontier Force Brigade, who again making a determined attack had the town of Sheik Said practically in their hands, and had killed and captured many hundreds of Turks.

Had we been in possession of land transport the problem was easy enough. We had only to complete the capture of Sheik Said, and then march across the arc of open desert, a distance of 30 miles to Kut, leaving the Turks to shovel back as fast as they could up the river. But we had no transport. However, the action of the Frontier Force Brigade practically turned the Turkish lines on both flanks, so that their whole force fell back 7 miles to a new position on the Wadi, a nullah which at that point joined the Tigris.

This meant that we were up against it again, on much the same lines as before. Sir Fenton Aylmer however worked out an excellent plan for turning the new position. This was to elbow round the Turkish left flank by a night march, and fall on his flank and rear.

It was a well-thought-out manœuvre, and bold in conception. The 7th Division (the only one) had, after nightfall, to be taken out of its trenches, facing the Turks, and marched in the dark 6 miles to the right. At dawn it was to wheel to the left and cross the Wadi outside the Turkish flank.

The plan worked admirably up to a certain point. We got out of the trenches without being noticed ; we made the night march ; at dawn we crossed the Wadi ; and not a Turk had

yet been seen. The leading brigade was then directed to march straight for a narrow neck of land, marked on our maps as "The Gap," which lay between the Salt lake and the Tigris, and which afforded the only line of retreat to the Turks.

This leading brigade, after proceeding some way, came up against trenches, skilfully echeloned to prevent this manœuvre. Another brigade was sent to work outside the first one, and thus gain the gap. This brigade also got held up in a similar manner. For the country was dead flat, without a vestige of cover. Then the cavalry brigade was sent on a still wider turn, and ordered to make a dash for the Tigris, so as to enclose the Turks on the Wadi. This effort also failed, and night fell.

But the Turks, realising their position, retreated during the night and got back to the Gap. Thus we had to begin again, with greatly depleted forces, to try and drive a superior force, in an entrenched and invisible position, by frontal attacks across the dead open. Sir Fenton certainly had extraordinarily bad luck. The Wadi battle ought to have been a crowning success, but British luck was dead out in those parts in those days.

So short were we of river boats and hospital ships, that the boats containing our food and kits had to be commandeered to take down the wounded. This left us very cold and hungry, on top of hard fighting. My own appetite is very small at the best of times, but two sardines and a bit of biscuit is not very satisfying after forty-eight hours' fast.

One evening my Staff got hold of a rather doubtful-looking tin of herrings, but even hunger could not face these without even a scrap of biscuit to help it down. Our drink was the muddy Tigris water, a sort of *café au lait* colour. The rain fell steadily, and a pitiless north wind blew through us like swords.

Some days passed like this, and then some rations came up, but never a full one; whilst most of us were completely out of tobacco in any form. A certain number of tents also came up, and preparations were made for another assault on the fresh Turkish position. This time it was more formidable than ever, for it stretched for only 2,000 yards, with both flanks secure, one resting on the Tigris and the other on a great shallow lake then flooded to an area of 90 square miles. This was the Hannah position of hideous memory.

To help in the attack Raleigh Egerton's brigade, just arrived from France, was sent up. Sir Fenton Aylmer's plan of attack was a good one; indeed, the only possible one. The regiments of the Division, twelve in all, after an artillery preparation, were to attack the right flank of the Hannah position, in column of regiments. Thus hoping to burst through by sheer weight and bravery; for it may again be emphasised that the ground was perfectly flat and devoid of all cover.

The artillery preparation could only be very meagre, for we only had a few guns and were short of ammunition. It served, however, to keep the Turks' heads down whilst the infantry moved to the attack.

The success of this attack depended on there being no check, that wave after wave of regiments should flow forward, regardless of losses. All went well with the first four regiments, led by the ever-gallant Black Watch, followed by the 6th Jāts, the 97th Punjabis, and 41st Dogras. Then one regiment lost direction, which was easy in a bare plain without landmarks. The wave stopped, the flow to the front ceased, and the front regiments were isolated by a hail of fire from the Turkish trenches.

The Black Watch with magnificent dash, and well supported by the 6th Jāts and 97th Punjabis, actually effected a lodgment in the Turkish trenches, but having no bombs were themselves, after a severe fight and very heavy losses, bombed out by the Turks. Then the rain came down harder than ever, and the bitter north wind blew its worst.

The ground became a quagmire and all further movements of troops became impossible. This heroic endeavour, the third we had made to relieve Townshend, cost us very heavily indeed. That evening out of the whole twelve regiments only 1,270 men were left. These were gathered together in a hastily constructed trench about 1,000 yards from the Turks.

During the night I went round to see how my brigadiers were faring. Two of them I found almost dead with cold and fatigue. One was speechless, and I never expected to see him alive again. The other just whispered—

“I don't think I can stick it till daylight.”

Another brigadier, Harvey, a very fine fellow and fine leader, met his end in a strange way. He, being furthest off, was asked

on the telephone what time he could arrive in, for a conference of general officers. He was asked if he could arrive by such a time, or whether he would prefer to make it half an hour later. After hesitating a moment, he telephoned that the later time had better be fixed, as he was not sure of the way. In due course we saw him approaching on foot, accompanied by another, who proved to be Chandler, the war correspondent. When fairly close to us they came to a pond of rain-water about 30 yards long, and we saw them stop and debate which way round they should go

They decided to go round by the right side. After a few yards' walk, as they reached the head of the pond, a bullet caught Harvey just above the belt and inflicted a mortal wound. Had he chosen the earlier hour for the rendezvous, or had the two selected the left-hand way round the pond, the gallant Harvey might be alive this day.

Close by us lay a dead Connaught Ranger, and one of my staff, thinking there might be some food in his haversack, now no longer of use to him, opened it and found there some pearl biscuits, each about the size of a shilling. These, divided amongst us, was our meal that night.

On another of these awful nights we were saved by old Kadir Dad, my Indian servant. As we were lying wet and cold in the open, in a half-drowsy condition, we heard the British sentry challenge, fiercely—

“Halt ! Who comes there ? ”

No answer.

“Halt ! Who comes there ? ” with added ferocity.

“General Sahib *kahan hai* ? ” (Where is the General Sahib ?)

A still fiercer “Halt ! Who comes there ? ” And the rattle of a rifle-bolt.

“General Sahib *ka nauker* ” (the General's servant).

One of my staff understanding the language, jumped up, assuaged the sentry, and going out fetched in old Kadir Dad.

He had walked back goodness knows how many miles ; had boarded a ship and by persuasion, guile, and many rupees, procured a bottle of whisky, a tumbler, and a bottle of clean water. He had also “chanced across,” as the soldiers say, a deck-chair.

Carrying these precious burdens, old Kadir Dad had again walked miles, through the rain and slush, through bands of

roving Arab marauders, past fierce sentries, and even fiercer friends who would have given untold gold for that bottle of whisky ; and at last, towards midnight, found his General Sahib.

Did we bless old Kadir Dad ? Didn't we !

Kadir Dad and I to this day write to each other regularly, once or twice a year, generally about midsummer and at Christmas. With his wages, saved up during the war, he bought a house in his beloved Dera-Ismail-Khan city, and every year we try to think of some new little present to send him. Kadir Dad cannot write English, so he gets the mess babu to write from his dictation, with sometimes rather amusing results. Here is one—

MOST HONOURED SIR,—

I, the undersigned, your honours humble servant, most respectfully and humbly beg to acknowledge the receipt of my August Master's present viz—silver watch with nice chain with many awful thanks and become immensely glad.

I feel ever deeply grateful for this kindness and prey the Almighty God to bestow upon your honour an early flourishing health, wealth and prosperity as well as may it please Him to make me so lucky to see your honour again.

I request to offer my best salaams to lady Saheba and my hearty respects to self.

I am getting on well here and hope that your gratious honour and lady Saheba are also enjoying a pleasant health.

Begging to be pardoned for trespassing

I beg to remain

Most Honoured Sir

Your most faithful servant

KADIR DAD.

One of the first Indians to win the Victoria Cross was Sepoy Lala, of the 41st Dogras, and a very noble deed it was. Sepoy Lala is a Dogra, that is a hill Rajput, claiming kinship with the chivalrous Rajputs of Rajputana, of whom Sir Pertab Singh was so shining a light.

In the course of the attack on the Turkish trenches the 41st Dogras regiment suffered heavy casualties, and with the rest of the brigade was pinned to the ground, close to the enemy,

and unable to advance or retire. Sepoy Lala was with his company in the second or third line, and heard, or thought he heard, his Major calling for help. Getting leave, therefore, he crept forward on hands and knees, or dropping on his belly crawled along, till he came to the spot whence the sounds had come.

Here in truth he found his Major, very badly wounded, and in great agony. Binding up his wounds as best he could, and building up a little bank to protect him from more bullets, Sepoy Lala lay and chatted and cheered the Major.

Then from still further forward he heard a voice, which was certainly that of his Adjutant Sahib. So he asked the Major Sahib if he might go forward, and see if he could help the Adjutant Sahib. But the Major Sahib forbade him to go. He said it was quite useless, for he had seen a Highlander try to crawl towards the Adjutant Sahib, but he had been instantly shot dead. The spot where this converse took place was 150 yards from the Turks, and where the Adjutant lay was some 60 yards in advance.

But Sepoy Lala said—

“With great respect to your Honour I will take leave, and go and see how is the Adjutant Sahib, and then as soon as the fire abates I will return, and help your Honour back.”

So Sepoy Lala wriggled forward the 60 yards, and found his Adjutant in sore plight and sadly wounded. Moreover it was raining hard and blowing icy cold. So first Sepoy Lala bound as best he could the Adjutant’s wounds, and then took off his own coat and laid it over him. Then cautiously he laid himself along, so as to form a bulwark with his body for the Adjutant, against the wind and the Turkish bullets.

This was at eight o’clock in the morning, and thus he lay all day, drenched to the skin, shielding his Adjutant, and speaking comforting words to him.

When the light began to grow dim in the evening, Sepoy Lala said to the Adjutant—

“I will now go and fetch a stretcher. Be of good cheer, Sahib, till I return.”

At first on his belly, and then on his hands and knees, Sepoy Lala crawled for 500 yards till he could get under the bank of the Tigris river, and then he ran for succour. On his way he had passed the Major, and said he would soon fetch him out.

Having secured some stretchers and bearers, Sepoy Lala guided the party up the river to the point where he had struck it. There he left them, and set out alone to find his two Sahibs. How he managed to do so was almost a miracle, for there were no marks or signs on the dead level plain to guide, and it was dark and raining.

But find them he did, first the Major. But the Major said—

“Leave me, and bring in the Adjutant Sahib first.”

Creeping up to the Adjutant, Sepoy Lala was faced with a new difficulty. He could not stand up and carry his officer, for both would then have been shot dead at once. The Adjutant could not crawl even, so badly wounded was he. But Sepoy Lala was not to be defeated. He said to the Adjutant—

“Now, Sahib, I will lie on my face close to you. And you must try somehow to turn on your side, and between us we will then see if we can get you so that you are lying on top of me. I will then gently raise myself on my hands and knees, and crawl away with you. Perchance those *shaitāns* (devils) will not see us.”

After many efforts Sepoy Lala at last got the Adjutant on to his back as he had planned. Then on hands and knees, with this heavy burden, he crawled away through the slush and mire. Resting often by the way, at last he arrived at the river bank, where the stretcher-bearers were waiting, and handed over his burden.

Then, taking a drink from the river, Sepoy Lala started back to fetch the Major. After what seemed hours, as indeed it was, a dark object which looked like some strange beast was seen approaching. It was Sepoy Lala again crawling along, and carrying the Major on his back. The bearers lifted the Major on to a stretcher to carry him back to safety. And they said—

“You too, Lala, will accompany us? Hast thou not done much bravery? It is enough. Come back and take thy rest.”

“Not so,” replied Sepoy Lala. “I have seen others of my brethren sore wounded, whilst I by the grace of God have escaped. I will drink a little water, and then return and give them help.”

Four others did Sepoy Lala succour, till daylight made his task impossible.

Both the Major and the Adjutant after a few days died of their wounds, but before they died they dictated and signed a report from which this account is taken.

Hearing of this brave deed, or rather series of brave deeds, I sent for Sepoy Lala to congratulate him. The boy, for he was little more than a boy, arrived simply beaming, and looking as fresh as paint. I shook hands with him, which in the etiquette of the East is an honour usually reserved for an Indian officer, and told him that he was a brave warrior, and that I should recommend him for the medal for bravery.

He grinned wider than ever, and remarked, after the manner of the East—

“ It was due entirely to your Honour’s kindness ! ”

I at once recommended Sepoy Lala for the Victoria Cross, supported by the written report of the two dead British officers. In a very few weeks Sepoy Lala, now promoted to be a Lance-Naik (lance-corporal), was sporting the red ribbon, which the soldier values before all others.

Sir Fenton Aylmer, whose health had been none of the best, and against whom the Fates had fought their hardest, now gave way to Sir George Gorringe,¹ the “ blood orange,” as the soldiers affectionately called him, a euphemistic abbreviation of the soldier’s pet word, and Gorringe. Sir George had won a notable victory at Nasariyeh on the Euphrates a few months before Ctesiphon, and was recognised as a General of resource, energy, and driving power. He was one of Kitchener’s men in the old Egypt days, and in the Boer War was one of the most successful column commanders. Indeed, he was a terror to the Boers, and they thirsted for his blood.

It was decided that the next assault on the Hannah position should be made by the 13th British Division, under Sir Stanley Maude, which had recently arrived from Gallipoli. To give it every chance, covered approaches, and line after line of trenches were dug by us, the work taking several weeks. In fact we sapped up to within 100 yards of the Turkish trenches. Then one night the 13th Division took our place, and at crack of dawn swarmed over and captured the position, practically without loss.

Given time, this of course was the way to do it, but Townshend and his men were starving, and every hour was of im-

¹ Lieut.-General Sir George Gorringe, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.

portance. So the next assault on the Sanayet position, to which the Turks had retired, had to be made the very next morning by my division. We were marching most of the night, though the distance was not great, and made our endeavour at dawn. But such an attack, across the open, against entrenched troops, especially good in defence, as are the Turks, is practically hopeless unless it is in the nature of a complete surprise. Our only chance was that we might catch the Turks unprepared and on the run, after their Hannah defeat. There was no such luck: they were snugly entrenched, and quite ready for us. So when we had worked up to within 500 yards of them, we were brought to a halt and entrenched.

The Sanayet position was exactly like the Hannah position, a short front, with flanks secure, compelling the attackers to come straight across the open. After a few days' preparation and having our trenches established within 500 yards of the Turks, Stanley Maude's 13th Division was again called up and made a night attack. This too failed.

Sometime previously an effort had been made on the other bank of the Tigris, a fairly strong Division trying to march round the Turkish flank. But again, though the plan was excellent, it failed. Our luck was indeed dead out. Some of our troops reached within 3 miles of Kut, and with glasses could see the garrison.

The Turks were greatly elated, and put up notice boards with large inscriptions—

KUT EST VAINCU
IL FAUT S'EN ALLER

and the like.

We also, not to be behindhand, put up notices. We had just heard that the Russians had taken Erzeroum, so our little efforts ran—

QUEL PRIX ERZEROUM

and

REGARDEZ A VOTRE DERRIERE

The wonderful old Frontier Force Brigade still stood up, but sadly depleted. Only one officer at this time remained of all those who had sailed with it from India eighteen months before. This was Colonel Charlie Davies, and even he had

been wounded and returned. My successor in command, G. W. Kemball, was knocked out badly wounded at Sanayet. A. M. S. Elsmie, his successor, got a bad one through the thigh, and was succeeded by Charlie Davies. Longhurst, the Brigade-Major, was severely wounded twice, once in Palestine and once in Mesopotamia. G. H. Chapman, the Staff Captain, was killed near the Dujela redoubt. Every single regimental officer had gone, killed or wounded. It was a woeful record, but a brave and glorious one.

One of the bravest fellows in the Division, where all were brave, was our Padre,¹ Irwin, a small man, and lame from his birth, but with the heart of a lion. Padre Irwin earned the D.S.O. and the M.C., with a bar to the latter, for bravery and devotion on three separate occasions. I should have given him the Victoria Cross myself, but there are all sorts of rules and regulations which, perhaps rightly, hedge this decoration about.

Anyway Padre Irwin earned the Victoria Cross half a dozen times. Here is one occasion. In our attack on the Hannah position, we had very great losses, and when night fell hundreds of wounded were lying in the open, between us and the Turks, some of these as close as 90 yards from their front trench. The rain was pouring heavily, and it was pitch-dark. Without a word, out into this hell marched Padre Irwin, slung around with haversacks, containing all he could collect of food and drink, but quite unarmed.

All night long he stumbled, from one wounded man to another, doing all he could for them, right close up to the Turkish trenches. The risk he ran was not only from the Turkish fire, or our fire, which might at any moment break out, but even more perhaps from the bands of Arabs, who after a battle worm in, to loot the dead and dying, and are ugly customers to meet alone. Of these marauders, he came across many, but drove them off with harsh words, or the flourish of an imaginary revolver. The number of lives Padre Irwin saved that night, and the number he sent off in peace to their long home, is written in the good book which the Almighty keeps.

Some extraordinary things happened during this almost amphibious fighting. For, apart from the rain, we had to fight

¹ Now Canon R. J. B. Irwin, D.S.O., M.C., Croix de Guerre.

the water on both flanks. On our left the Tigris in flood, and on our right the Great Salt Lake, which any northern wind sent flowing in on to us. We had to build great banks, running for miles, to keep the Tigris from swamping us on that side ; and other banks along the lake, to save ourselves from being flooded thence. These had to be built, patrolled, and repaired, in full view of the Turks, and often within a few hundred yards of them.

In one of our attacks on the Sanayet position, the Leicestershire Regiment had their flank on the Salt Lake, and amongst the casualties was a subaltern named Ellis. He was badly shot, in several places, and fell close to the edge of the lake. In a half-conscious condition he felt his feet and legs getting wet, so he raised himself painfully to pull clear of it. At that moment another bullet caught him through the head, destroying the sight of both eyes ; and he was naturally left for dead. This occurred about 500 yards in front of the abandoned Turkish gun-pit, in which were my divisional headquarters. This gun-pit was about 1,000 yards from the Turkish front line trenches. Ellis was hit, at about 6 a.m. in the morning, as has been said, 500 yards in front of where we were, and he was found behind us, some said 300 yards, alive, at ten o'clock next morning. How he drifted that distance, without being drowned, is a mystery to this day. Ellis did not regain consciousness till a week afterwards, when he was in a hospital down the river, and could remember nothing except trying to pull clear of cold water, that was wetting him.

As this same attack was going on, two other rather remarkable incidents happened. Just to our right, about 100 yards away, a single Highlander was crossing the open, indeed it was all open, towards the front. I happened to be looking at him, when suddenly the side of his kilt lifted, a thick grey black cloud of smoke went up, and the Highlander fell dead. It was not a shell that had killed him, for we should have seen that explode. The conclusion we came to was that he was carrying up ammunition in his haversack, and that a Turkish bullet hit this and exploded the lot. Or perhaps he had one or two bombs, brought from France, in his haversack, and that these were hit by a bullet and exploded.

The second incident was in connection with an officer. Just before leaving England, he had, as a joke, gone with some girl

friends to a fortune-teller, to have his fortune told. The fortune-teller told him a lot of things, of small interest, as it seemed, and amongst others that he would shortly be in a position of great danger. That was a fairly safe prophecy to make to an officer, during the war.

She added that he would not be killed, but that she saw him limping on one leg. The whole party made merry over this little adventure. The officer a few days after was ordered to Mesopotamia, and there, only the night before this battle, had told his mess-mates of his experience with the fortune-teller.

Just behind our gun-pit was a shallow trench, dug by some passing regiment ; or perhaps by the Turks in their retreat. This trench was used by successive lines of troops, as they came up to join in the attack. Glancing back at this trench, a couple of companies of infantry in open order, and led by an officer, might be seen advancing from it. The officer had not gone 20 yards, when he fell, shot through the leg. And all he said was—

“Thank God, the old woman was right.”

He lost his leg, but not his life.

The gay and débonnaire way in which these splendid young British officers took on, time after time, these deadly frontal attacks, from which so many of them could not possibly return, was simply splendid. Nothing damped their spirits, or dimmed their quaint humour. One evening, threading along a front-line trench, my staff officer leading the way, we came to a little dug-out, in which some officers of the Black Watch had their little mess. The staff officer poked his head in first, and seeing his red band, and knowing who he was, one of the inmates said—

“Hullo ! old chap, come in.”

The second officer at once added—

“I know what you have come for. We are for it again to-morrow.”

The third got up, and solemnly taking his own right hand with his left, shook it warmly, and said—

“Good-bye, old boy, you are for it all right at crack of dawn.”

Then all three burst into cheerful laughter. It was a deadly game, but they took it like sportsmen.

It was only too true, they had to attack again next day. But after it was over, I was glad indeed to come across at any rate the officer who had so cheerfully said "good-bye" to himself. He had come through unscathed.

One day when on board a river boat, which was tied to the bank, we saw a common or barn-door fowl fly off a boat astern, and drop into the Tigris. Naturally we thought he would drown, as is usually ordained for his species, in deep water. Not at all; he quietly swam up-stream, as if he were a duck, came to our boat, saw there was no convenient way on board, swam round it, and then went leisurely on shore. Kadir Dad was sent back to the boat astern, to find out who was the owner of this wonderful bird. He came back, and said that it belonged to an Arab stoker, that the said stoker had paid Rs. 1 for it, and that he would no doubt part with the bird for Rs. 2. Back went Kadir Dad, with two rupees, and returned with the fowl in his arms, a little fellow of bright game-cock colouring.

Our dug-out was close to the banks of the Tigris, so when the cock felt bored with life ashore, he would paddle into the river and swim about at his pleasure. He was a great success when strangers passed our way, for no one before had seen a swimming cock. His feet were not webbed, but he got through the water quite strongly nevertheless. That cock was as the apple of his eye to Kadir Dad.

"This wonderful beast must assuredly go to *belait*,¹ to the Lady Saheba, after the war," he would say.

He must have been near death many a time, when we were at our wits' end for food, but Kadir Dad was a sure shield, so that he survived that peril.

When I was invalided later down the river, my A.D.C., Wodehouse of the 14th Hussars, and Kadir Dad, and the cock, came too. Unhappily cholera broke out on this hospital steamer on the way down. On arrival in Basra, therefore, Wodehouse, Kadir Dad, and the cock were sent into segregation camp, and I to hospital. And then somehow, most unfortunately, Kadir Dad and the cock got separated, and the swimming cock was never seen again.

It has since been ascertained that this is no uncommon phenomenon in lower Mesopotamia. There every year the

¹ England.

country is flooded, and the village fowls perchance walk about in the shallow water. Nature, as in the case of ducks, causes the body to exude an oily substance which covers the feathers, and gradually makes a fowl as water-tight as a duck.

Chapman, the Staff Captain of the Frontier Force Brigade, was a very great loss to us, for he was not only first-class at his work, but was beloved of all. Having escaped death from poisoning at Port Said, he was reserved for a nobler end, on the battle-field. We had no ambulances at that time, so that the wounded had to be carried in rough transport carts without springs, a most agonising mode of transit for a badly injured man. Chapman often said—

“I hope to goodness I shall not have to ride in one of those beastly things, if ever I am hit.” In the attack on the Dujela redoubt, he was shot through the body, at a spot some seven miles from the Field Hospital, and the awful prospect was before him of a seven-mile jolt over a roadless country in a springless cart. The medical officer who gave first aid said it would certainly kill him. So arrangements were made for eight men in reliefs to carry him gently on a light stretcher.

In due course Chapman arrived back at the hospital, and having had injections of morphia, seemed fairly comfortable. The medical officer thought it would be unwise for me to go in, as rest and quiet were best for him.

“I am afraid,” he added, “he cannot last till morning.”

Later this officer went in, and gently mentioned that, as he might not feel so well later, could he do anything for him, write any letters, or take charge of his small treasures? Chapman however was, as ever, quite cheerful and hopeful. He thanked the doctor, and said he was quite all right, and would go to sleep. And so passed away a very gallant gentleman.

We buried him on the banks of the Tigris, below flood mark, and smoothed the earth over, so that no mound or mark remained. The marsh Arab is the lowest skunk on earth, and it was only thus that we could save our honoured dead from desecration. The old Tigris now flows peaceful over them, and guards their quiet resting-place.

As a last desperate effort, my poor old 7th Division was directed to make yet one more of those deadly frontal attacks.

By now we had got up a fair amount of gun ammunition, and could afford a mild sort of artillery preparation. This took place, and then the god of battles, whom we all declared must be a Turk, sent a strong wind from the north, which caused the lake to overflow into our trenches, as well as flood the ground over which the infantry were then attacking. No troops in the world could have succeeded under such conditions. So, after a desperate struggle, the battle died away, and Kut was doomed.

We had lost 24,000 men in this fruitless endeavour to relieve Townshend and his 10,000. It was not till some eight months later that the whole force, having been reorganised and reinforced, properly equipped, and liberally supplied with all that is required for such an undertaking, again moved forward. It was now under the command of Sir Stanley Maude, who then made his great and historic campaign, which culminated in the capture of Baghdad.

The fall of Kut, it was feared, would greatly damage British prestige in the East, and especially in India. Naturally too the Germans and Turks made the most of it in their propaganda. But curiously enough this unhappy event had no effect whatever, as far as British prestige went. It was merely looked upon as an incident in a world-wide campaign. Asiatics in general, and the Indians in particular, knew that if the British thought it worth their while to reverse the tables on the Turks, they would certainly do so.

Long before Stanley Maude made his victorious advance, my own adventures in that dreadful land had come to an end. To this day it is a nightmare, and it is with difficulty that I have been induced to write this much about it.

One morning, a month or so after the fall of Kut, Colonel White, our P.M.O., came to my tent, and found me so deadly ill, that he there and then packed me on board a boat and invalided me down the Tigris. Partially blind, and covered with sores, it was rather a sorry wreck that reached the sea. But England is a great country, and Sir Richard Cruise a great surgeon, so that now, six years later, the world is clear and bright again.

There has been much debating, backwards and forwards, as to whether it is wise or not to retain our hold on Mesopotamia. This is no time or place to enter into a long treatise on the

subject, but it is perhaps allowable to put the case in a concrete form.

If any one of us, man or woman, were suddenly to be left a large estate, potentially of great value, but which for several years would be a drain on our resources, should we stick to it, or should we give it away? Each can answer that question from his or her point of view.

Mesopotamia, in the most unlooked-for manner, and not as the result of any policy, came suddenly into the possession of the British Empire. It is potentially a very valuable property, but it will take time and money to develop it. Should the British Empire stick to it, or give it away?

That is the purely business side of the question.

But there are also political, military, and moral considerations. These with many Englishmen bear greater weight than do questions of the saving or expenditure of cash. Looking back on the growth of the British Empire, one may recognise many occasions, throughout the centuries, when similar problems presented themselves to the British people. We can read also how our ancestors faced such problems, and how they shouldered the responsibilities thrust upon them.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WARFARE OF FORTY YEARS

WHEN we think of it, the British Empire is a very wonderful thing, but the British subaltern who has helped to build it up is almost equally wonderful. Naturally the Navy, and Admirals, and Generals, and Statesmen, have had a hand in the matter, but the British subaltern is the root and kernel of the whole matter. He, bless him, has not the remotest notion what a fine fellow he is ; he just does his job, cracks his jokes, plays his games, fights like a gentleman, and, if needs be, dies like a man. He is the product of Eton or Winchester, Rugby or Clifton, Marlborough or Cheltenham, a perfectly ordinary Public School boy, but he has in him the finest qualities, such as can be equalled by no other nation.

And this is not so very strange, for there runs in that British subaltern's veins the best fighting blood, and the best ruling blood, that the world has produced. And this has been mixed and matured over a period of some two thousand years. With that of the ancient Briton has been blended such fine full fighting blood as was introduced by the Romans, the Norsemen, the Danes, the Saxons, the Scots, the Normans. And this good blood, was not only that of the sword and the sea, but of the sceptre. Thus our perfectly modest boy, in the Guards or Hussars, the Fusiliers or Highlanders, Sapper or Gunner, with his Public School training behind him, has been one of the great agents in building up the wonder of the world, the British Empire.

Sitting at the mess table of an ordinary British regiment may be seen any night some twenty-five officers, all apparently quite ordinary folk, just plain British officers, and gentlemen. But haphazard round that table, the Colonel might point to this one, or to that, to a third or fourth, a sixth or a seventh ; and they might be sent forth to the four quarters of the globe. To India or China ; to Persia or

Arabia ; to Egypt or Mesopotamia ; to Africa, north, south, east, or west ; to the North Pole, or to the South Pole ; to the uttermost parts of the earth or sea. And there that British officer will make good.

He will take over his mission, whatever it is, small or great, as if to the manner born. He will rule huge countries with justice and equity, he will raise, train and command great armies, he will foster trade and bring riches and prosperity, he will build and make roads, he will turn the savage into a prosperous peasant, he will water the desert till vast fields of corn flourish thereon. It is in his blood, and curiously enough there is no other blood in this world that can produce the same phenomenon.

This theme might be worked out to any extent, with numberless illustrations, but here it is only intended to lightly sketch how, in the course of the past forty years, the British officer has adapted himself, and trained his splendid soldiers, to meet each new and seemingly bewildering problem as the Empire has expanded.

When we were cadets at Sandhurst, the latest wars of great consequence to us, were the Crimean War, and the Indian Mutiny ; whilst behind these, some considerable way, lay the Peninsular War, and Waterloo. True, in between had come the Six Weeks War, and the Franco-German War of 1870, but in these we had taken no part, and with the Waterloo tradition we had our own opinion about how battles should be fought.

Thus at Sandhurst, during the whole year of our training, we never once left the parade ground, a level gravel space, some 300 yards long by 150 yards broad. On this restricted terrain, twice a day, we learnt in progressive stages how to win the battle of Waterloo over again. Sergeants of the Guards taught us to drill, with incredible accuracy and smartness. Several hundred times a year, we would march in column, in the direction of the Commandant's house, and at some unforeseen moment, a few yards this way or that, would come the stern command "Left wheel in Line" ; and woe betide the left marker who had gained or lost an inch or two. Markers, two per company, then were ordered to the front, and the whole line was dressed by the Adjutant.

We were now ready for battle, facing our old enemy, the

Sandhurst Lake. At this lake, we fired withering volleys, by companies, the front rank kneeling on one knee, a position heartily disliked by the front rank, especially on wet days, and the rear rank standing. But as at Waterloo, the enemy were not to be thus easily disposed of, and their cavalry were now about to make a desperate charge.

This however was no surprise to Sandhurst cadets, and the order immediately rang out, "Prepare for cavalry! Form company squares." No sooner said than done. Out rattled the bayonets, and there we were, six or eight company squares, bristling like steel hedgehogs, and quite uninviting to the hardiest horseman.

It is curious to remember, that during this weekly Waterloo we were never entrusted with a single round of blank ammunition, we just snapped our rifles, and drove away the cavalry like that. But woe betide the luckless wight who, in snapping, was the hundredth part of a second, before or after, his comrades. The sharp-eared Adjutant, and Guards sergeants, spotted that miscreant at once.

Naturally, as we were not allowed to fire blank ammunition, still less were we entrusted with balled ammunition. Not once did any of us fire a round, or have any musketry instruction, during our whole Sandhurst career. Nevertheless we learnt a lot, though we were only dimly aware of the fact. We learnt discipline, we learnt to obey at once, unhesitatingly and almost automatically, the command of a superior officer. We learnt that cleanliness and smartness are next to godliness. We learnt that to be well turned out, whether in uniform or mufti, was expected of a gentleman who carried the Queen's Commission. And we learnt a certain amount about tactics, military sketching, and military law.

From Sandhurst, as full-blown officers, we joined our regiments. There we began as recruits, once again under a smart drill-sergeant. Again we were instructed how to salute, how to walk about very slowly with each foot in turn delicately poised in the air, how to right or left about turn, and how to spring to attention with extraordinary alertness. Again we learnt squad drill and company drill, till at last we arrived again at our old friend the battle of Waterloo. And yet again we drove off the enemy, with volleys of astonishing precision, and received cavalry in the same old inhospitable manner.

But we made one stride forward, we were actually allowed to fire a rifle, with ball ammunition too, and at a target. Indeed we went through a recruit's course of musketry at Hythe. Except for this we never went off the parade ground once.

There were some pushing fellows of course, who actually tried to learn how to use a sword, an officer's only weapon in those days, but this was an "extra," and not part of our training. The sword was considered only to be an insignia of rank, to mark the officer. In moments of great excitement, in battle for instance, it might be used to flourish about, or to point at the position of the enemy (*vide pictures of heroes*) ; but as a weapon for attack, or defence, it was not seriously considered. Indeed, our swords were generally supplied by our tailors, with other trappings, as a purely ornamental adjunct. Some of us had private revolvers, most had not, but neither those who had, nor those who had not, were taught to shoot with this weapon.

Thus trained in the traditions of Waterloo, we as boys of eighteen suddenly found ourselves hurled into the Afghan War. It is difficult to find any greater contrast, as far as terrain is concerned, between the Sandhurst parade ground, or even the rolling plains of Flanders and Belgium, and the rugged and lofty mountains on the Afghan border. Still more pronounced is the difference between fighting the French, or any other nation in Europe, and fighting against elusive mountaineers, in their native fastnesses.

With the stroke of the wizard's wand, we who as far as soldiering went, had never been off a parade ground in our lives, found ourselves 6,000 miles away, on the farthest frontiers of the Empire, and faced with problems as strange to us as they might be to a man from Mars. But we had our schoolboy training, our training as cadets at Sandhurst, and our English blood. That, as so often before, and after, sufficed. Now spread out in thin lines, skirmishing up the great mountains, where a whole regiment looks nothing more formidable than so many midges on a bush, the British soldier, led by these same lads, drove steadily the hardiest mountaineers in the world off their native precipices.

Here in Afghanistan, besides learning to work in open formation, over the most difficult country, the lesson was

forcibly brought home to us, that the enemy could shoot with great accuracy, at unknown ranges, whilst we were very indifferent shots at any ranges, and at anything but a large and stationary target, the said target being white with an enormous black bullseye in the centre.

It was Lord Roberts who got that point clear and steadfast in his brain, and taught the Army to shoot, not only at black bullseyes on white targets, but as time went on, at moving objects, as nearly as possible representing the enemy's soldiers in action.

We had now, in our young war museum, the steady shoulder-to-shoulder warfare of Waterloo, and the open moving warfare of the Afghan mountains. Heigh ! presto ! and we find ourselves in the Soudan, fighting on another frontier of the Empire.

Was Waterloo, or the Afghan experience, of value ? In a way "Yes," in a way "No." We had the same old discipline, we were accustomed to be shot over, and were inured to sudden alarms and excursions.

All else was different. The Waterloo model was not much good, for there was no field of fire. The open mountain warfare was not feasible, for there were no mountains. Instead, we found ourselves, in dead level, bush country, where no man could see more than fifty yards in any direction.

Nothing deterred, the British Army took on this new problem, with all the matter-of-fact, and common-sense way of dealing with difficulties which centuries have matured.

We had to work through thick bush, to certain objectives, and we had to carry on pack animals the whole of the food, and water, and ammunition, necessary for the men and animals of the force. This same bush teemed with thousands of brave and fearless enemies, who could mass where and when they pleased, and could choose the right moment to charge home with sword and spear. To ward off the initial attacks of the enemy, or give timely notice of the more serious, a cavalry screen was manifestly necessary. But the cavalry could see no further into the bush than the infantry ; and its density precluded all cavalry tactics. It was the same with the artillery, they had no targets, till the enemy was at the muzzle of their guns.

A new problem indeed, but the British-born genius for rising to the occasion, and dealing with things as they come,

allowed Waterloo, and the Afghan mountains, to disappear, and the common-sense methods of countering the new conditions to make their appearance.

To scatter troops, as if on an open plain, or on mountain sides, or to proceed on the march in long thin columns, as on the roads of England and Europe, meant disaster of the first order. Of a certainty did it mean to be swamped by numbers, and massacred in the bush. So the British Army became an armadillo ; it marched about in squares, large or small, encased in steel bayonets which made it impervious to danger from every direction. Inside the armadillo, were its food and sustenance, and munitions of war. When the armadillo wanted to move to another place, it walked along just so ; and when it wanted to rest or sleep, it just stopped and cut down thorn bushes to take the place of the bayonets, and slept just so.

Thus it came about that the wild and brave warriors of the Soudan found that the new power was too great for them. They used their wiles and the cunning of bush fighters ; they tried their old simple tactics, which had prevailed before. But though brave to a fault, and now and then gaining a fleeting success, the wall of British bayonets, and British discipline, and British shooting, beat them.

So the war ended, and hundreds of thousands of square miles of country came into the custody of that same old Lion, more than 2,000 years old is he, who only wants to be left in quiet and comfort in his old age.

Assuredly now, with Waterloo, Afghan, and Soudan war-lore fully learnt, the next adventure will find the British officer equipped with experience for his next campaign. Not at all ! The next campaign for him, it so happens, is in Burmah, where everything is again entirely different.

In that country are no open plains, or rugged rocky mountains, no waterless deserts, no open bush. The plains and hills in Burmah are covered with dense forests, through which meander single-file tracks. Water there is everywhere, and in some seasons too much, so that the country is deluged and swamped with it. The enemy to be encountered, again is entirely different to a European, an Afghan, or an Arab, and his methods of fighting also widely differed from those before encountered in our previous wars.

After the first dash, up the Irrawaddy river, made in river steamers, towing barges, which resulted in the capture of Mandalay, it took some years of vicarious fighting to pacify the country, and make it again a place fit for quiet people to live in, and carry on their business.

Through the dense forest it was impossible to move large armies : indeed they were not required, for the enemy, suiting his tactics to his country, fought in small bodies widely scattered, over a country as large as Spain. The war thus became a subalterns' campaign, and here the British subaltern could be seen at his best. He had the temperament, the bravery, resource, and perseverance, to undertake hazardous exploits. He could act on his own responsibility, far away from the help and guidance, and perchance interference, of senior officers.

With a hundred men or so under his orders, the young officer would be sent on his errand. It might be to hunt down a roving band of dacoits, to round up a petty chief and his following, to take succour to a beleaguered post, or to combine with other small columns in some larger operations.

To do this he had to push along a single-file path, through dense never-ending forest. No flankers could be used to protect his flanks, or to feel his way. He had just to take his life in his hands and lead along ; for like Horatius on his bridge, one man could hold up an army on a footpath through the forest. So the subaltern had just to chance it, and when shot at, if not killed or badly wounded, dogged behind a tree, and perchance picked off his opposite number. Then he would send a few men right and left to laboriously cut their way through the undergrowth, and thus dislodge the foe. And so on again, till the next hold up. And thus at length, with many a good soldier laid low, to his objective.

This would usually be a stockaded village or stronghold ; the stockade constructed of teak beams, 10 feet high and 12 inches thick, with loopholes for the defenders to fire through. If the subaltern had with him a six-pounder mountain gun carried on a mule, he might knock a hole in the stockade and then assault through the breach, but if he had not a gun he had to assault anyhow.

The present rifle, that used in the Great War, would pierce palisades such as these as easily as paper screens, but the

Martini-Henry bullet of those days would not. So it was a case of pure escalade and the bayonet; back in fact to Peninsula days.

The Burmah War of 1886-87 was thus known as the subalterns' war, and when concluded it added a potentially rich province, as large as Spain, to the British Empire.

Again the old Lion had to take an unlooked-for and undesired meal. Evidently somebody sitting up aloft thought that the meal would be good for all parties, and so it has proved. Burmah, from being one of the most backward countries in Asia, has become a rich, prosperous, progressive province, well-governed, safe and secure.

The troops at Umballa, in 1897-98, were under the command of a very able and energetic commander, Brigadier-General Sir Penn Symons. This General thought out every possible variety of warfare in which British troops at some future date might be engaged, and trained his brigade for each.

Thus we would have field-days on purely European lines, our enemy being imaginary Russians. Then we had mountain warfare, as waged against Afghans and the tribes on the North-West Frontier. On other occasions we practised warfare suitable to the thorny bush deserts of Northern Africa, the enemy being represented by troopers of the 16th Lancers and 16th Bengal Cavalry suitably dressed, who charged us with blood-curdling cries, at inconvenient moments. We even practised forest warfare, such as might again be required in a country like Burmah. General Symons probably felt, as we all did, that now we were prepared for all contingencies.

Yet curiously enough we were not, for our next considerable war, the Boer War, presented an entirely different problem, and one which none of this training was calculated to solve.

Late in 1898, or early in 1899, Sir Penn Symons received a telegram from the War Office, offering him the command of the troops in Natal. This was to him a most unwelcome offer. South Africa appeared to be the most peaceful spot on earth, and no place for an aspiring soldier. In India all was before him. He had just come out of the Tirah campaign with a K.C.B., was a young General, well known in India and well thought of there. His foot was well up on the higher rungs of the ladder which leads to Snowdon.¹ He was loth to go,

¹ The official residence in Simla of the Commander-in-Chief.

but after taking counsel with those in authority, and whose opinion he valued, he went.

On his way down the East Coast of Africa, in a slow-moving German boat, which called at every port, Sir Penn wrote several letters, all showing that he was deeply depressed at leaving the martial fields of India for a quiet backwater in Natal.

But soon after he arrived there his letters grew brisk and bright ; the war horse smelt the battle from afar. It was his letters that first gave us any idea that serious trouble was brewing between us and the Boers. Then came the rumble of the approaching storm, and a force of all arms, British only, was shipped across from Bombay to Natal ; be it mentioned in the exceedingly neat and efficient manner for which the Indian Army was then renowned. The next we heard was that Sir Penn Symons had fought an action at Talana Hill, and had himself been killed.

Thus we came into a new war, where all the conditions were entirely different to those experienced in our preceding wars. And one of the first to fall was a General, who had tried to think out every possible form of war, and to train his troops to adapt themselves to each.

Hitherto infantry had been the main arm, and artillery the next, whilst cavalry were more or less an adjunct. But here we found that cavalry were the first essential, artillery assisting, whilst the infantry was almost out of it.

So everybody became a mounted man of sorts, cavalry, yeomanry, mounted infantry. Even the gunners were pressed into the service, and corps were formed of artillerymen mounted on ponies, and used as mounted rifles. It was a cavalry war, but not quite on old cavalry lines, for we learnt much from the Boers, especially in regard to the tactical use of dismounted fire. There was indeed very little knee to knee charging, for the simple reason that the Boer, very wisely, never remained to be charged.

The stereotyped cavalry pursuit and slaughter of the flying enemy also rarely came off, because as any hunting or racing man knows, it is not easy for a horse carrying 20 stone, however good he may be, to come up with even an inferior horse which has a mile start and is carrying only 12 stone. One or two exceptionally fast horses, ridden by officers, might get up

within striking distance of brother Boer, but certainly the whole regiment would not.

Thus our mounted forces came to be used strategically, rather than tactically. Great thrusts, with big masses of cavalry, were made to break through the Boer commandoes, as did French in the relief of Kimberley. Or wide encircling movements were made, as when Lord Roberts surrounded and captured Cronje and his forces at Paardeberg.

Working even on bigger lines, Lord Roberts made his advance on Pretoria. Heavy masses of cavalry, working out and round both flanks of the Boers, pinched them out of position after position, till the goal was won. The war was won too, and would have been at an end, but for the encouragement given to the Boers by British cranks, British politicians, and a section of the British Press.

Let us take an example of the harm these people may do to their own country, and their own soldiers. When we had conquered the Orange Free State, Lord Roberts issued a proclamation that the Orange Free State was now ours by right of conquest, thereby reiterating what had been publicly announced by the British Government. That therefore no armed men were allowed to roam the country, and that all arms in possession must be surrendered at the nearest military post. This was a most ordinary and common-sense precaution, which any General would take, considering that the further prosecution of the campaign would leave the Orange Free State athwart his lines of communication.

Hardly had Lord Roberts issued his proclamation, when the curious class of mind which in a war always fights against its own countrymen, raised such a hubbub in England, God only knows on what grounds, that Lord Roberts was ordered to withdraw his proclamation. The result was exactly what Lord Roberts, or any lesser General, could have foretold. Great and small nomadic bands of armed Boers rode about at their own free will throughout the Orange Free State, and, led by skilled leaders like De Wet, most seriously hampered the prosecution of the campaign. Nay, further, encouraged by these successes, encouraged still more by the cranks, politicians and Press aforementioned, the Boers took to a form of guerilla warfare which prolonged the war for a couple of years, cost the lives of thousands of gallant soldiers on both sides, and

cost England millions of money which might have been saved.

As the soldiers fought through the long and weary war, there were three people they would gladly have hanged from the nearest tree. One was a certain politician, the second was the owner of a certain weekly publication, and the third was the gentleman responsible for the scare headlines in one of the most sensational daily papers. The first two were frankly pro-Boer, and in any country but England would doubtless have dangled from the nearest lamp-post, for affording comfort and assistance to the Queen's enemies, in other words, for treason in war. The sensational daily, though doubtless strictly patriotic at heart, was imbued with the pestiferous American innovation of printing huge headlines about nothing at all. Thus would appear a headline, suitable perhaps for a great battle, or some great world event, thus printed, but much enlarged—

ANOTHER BRITISH DISASTER.

On reading further, one might discover that a patrol of three men and a sergeant were reported missing, which may or may not have been true, but certainly was a very minor incident in war. If that paper had never gone out of England, no great harm would have been done ; but it did, and went not only to friends, but to our enemies in Europe, Asia, and South Africa.

Such paragraphs, or perhaps only the headline and the date, would be found in farm-houses, or on captured Boers, most of whom could not read English, but who passed on these scraps, with their own verbal comments, from one commando to another, saying—"See, the English themselves say we are conquering them. Here is an English paper which announces that the British have suffered yet another defeat. Be of good courage, we shall now speedily win the war."

The guerilla warfare, which lasted nearly two years, was the most exhausting and elusive that any troops could be called upon to undertake. Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal are each very large countries, aggregating about one million square miles, and over this huge continent roamed small bands of Boers, amidst a populace naturally friendly to them.

To hunt down these bands was the task allotted to Lord Kitchener, who was freely and without stint supplied by the Government at home with all that he called for.

Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of blockhouses were built, each capable of holding a small infantry garrison. Between these ran strong barbed-wire fences, calculated to be proof against man or beast. These lines of blockhouses and barbed-wire fences were constructed so as to enclose great belts of country. When all was complete, masses of cavalry, moving almost knee to knee, swept the area from end to end, taking several days to complete the drive. But the results were usually disappointing. There was no really decisive round-up of large numbers of Boers, as a result of these great endeavours.

Meanwhile all over the continent small British mounted columns, numbering from 500 to 300 each, scoured all the country outside the barbed-wire enclosures, and sought to drive the elusive Boer into them, or into the hands of other columns. There were at one time operating no less than sixty of these columns, and the tangible successes gained were disappointingly small. Nevertheless the constant and endless harrying at last began to tell on the Boers, so that, as the third year of the war was nearing its end, they surrendered at discretion and peace was declared.

As a result of the Boer War, we brought away with us a very high opinion of a man armed with a long-range rifle, mounted on a horse, and also of the moral effect of artillery. "Pooping off a gun," as we irreverently called it, was often more effective in clearing the enemy out of a nasty position, than a set attack by infantry, or dismounted cavalry. Curiously enough, we learnt afterwards, that whilst we had turned all our cavalry into mounted riflemen, on the Boer pattern, the Boers themselves dreaded a British Lancer much more than any rifleman.

With all these accumulated experiences, the British Army came into the Great War, in August 1914. We had fought the Afghans amongst the arid rocks of their mountain land; at times in fierce tropical heat, and during other months in snow and bitter cold. The Egyptians we had fought in their country, the fertile fields of Pharaoh; and the Arabs in the hard thorny deserts of the Soudan. We had lowered the ancient might of the Kings of Ava, and through the trackless

forests of Burmah waged successful warfare. In East Africa, and West Africa, the sons of Ham had felt the irresistible onslaught of the British soldier.

Away on the great amphitheatre of mountains, girding the northern portals of the Indian Empire, the fiercest and most warlike mountaineers year after year had challenged the British outposts, and again and again had fallen back sore wounded when the Great Sirkar lifted its hand.

These enemies all were Africans or Asiatics, men, as some deem, inferior to the white races of Europe. Not inferior in courage and fighting qualities, but inferior in organisation, discipline and armament.

Then came a test against white men, the descendants of good old Dutch stock, which bred amidst wars and alarms, and reared in a climate favourable to the development of races of European blood, produced a race hardier and more warlike than any that can be found in Holland in this century. English blood too had filtered during generations into this hardy breed. And English blood and breeding, whether it is in the case of men, or horses, or cattle, or sheep, or dogs, or even poultry and pigs, the nations, and markets of the world, give answer as to its worth.

These white men, Dutch, and Anglo-Dutch, and Africander, are tough fellows and fine fighters, and it took England three years to show them that the Old Country was tougher still. But again it was no case of pure courage in battle, for in that all were equal. It was again discipline, organisation, and armament, and be it added superior numbers, which tipped the balance. And here it would not be out of place to mention what splendid service these same South Africans, whether Dutch, or Africander, or British settlers, did in the Great War. Nor should it be omitted that these same old antagonists, or half antagonists, won the hearts of British soldiers, because they fought and died without blare of trumpets, quiet soldierly fellows, who did their duty bravely, and lived or died as God pleased.

Here we are then in August 1914, with these various warlike experiences, marching towards Mons to meet the German army. Happily the Staff College, whilst taking into account our small wars all over the world, taught those who were there trained that war in Europe, and against great and admirably

equipped European armies, was a far different problem. The Staff, and the General Officers, of the rising generation were taught the principles of war as practised by the great masters, and especially by Napoleon, who in himself epitomised the teachings of Cæsar, Alexander, and Hannibal. They were taught and encouraged to keep in touch with the developments, whether in training, armament, mobilisation, or invention, of all European armies. More especially were preparations made to support the French, should Germany make on her an unprovoked assault.

Thus the little British Army, known to undying fame as the "Old Contemptibles," which took the field against the German Goliath, was perhaps the finest fighting force which has ever taken the field. The skill and the celerity with which it was mobilised, and in complete secrecy transported to the Belgian frontier, was a masterpiece of Staff work. The infantry, from lessons learnt in previous wars, and especially the Boer War, were the most deadly shots in Europe. Indeed a German officer at Mons said that when he heard the quiet half-drawling voice of a British officer give the word "Rapid Fire," his heart sank into his boots, for it was all aimed fire, and deadly true.

Many Germans indeed refused to believe that individual soldiers were delivering this devastating hail, and declared that it must be machine-gun fire. The cavalry were equally good shots with the rifle, and besides being splendidly mounted, were individually masters of the art of fighting with sword or lance. The artillery, though they had not such a good gun as the celebrated French '75, were magnificently horsed and equipped, and in training, manœuvring and shooting were up to the highest European standard.

The Supply Services, both as regards food and ammunition, were unequalled in any army engaged in the war. The food was admirable and plentiful, and no soldier has ever in the history of any war been so well fed as were the soldiers of the British Army in the Great War.

Of the Medical Services it is impossible to speak too highly : they were a masterpiece of efficiency. Not only was the treatment of wounds admirably and skilfully attended to on the battlefield, but the evacuation of the wounded to the coast, and to England, was worked with the most remarkable ability and celerity. But the Medical Services not only looked after

the wounded and sick, but by watching over the men and their health, under the most terrible climatic conditions, saved thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, of gallant soldiers from disease and death. The record of the British Medical Services in the Great War is one of which both they and England may well be proud.

The Great War was, for the British, not only a campaign in Flanders, but a world war. Apart from the great and main effort on the French frontier, we were faced with separate campaigns in parts of the globe thousands of miles apart, and thousands of miles from England. In China, to the far East, there was the German fortress and possessions at Kauchau to be assaulted. Across half the globe westward, a campaign in the Cameroons had to be undertaken. From British South Africa, the invasion and conquest of German West Africa, was the opening problem.

In East Africa the enormous territory known as German East Africa was the scene of another prolonged struggle. Further north in Africa, Egypt and the Suez Canal had to be held secure, and the campaign in that region against the Turks lasted the full four years of the Great War.

To add to the burden of war borne by the British, a small precautionary measure to guard the Anglo-Persian oil wells, developed as the years went on, into a comparatively great subsidiary campaign, which after fluctuating fortunes led to the conquest of the whole of Mesopotamia, the Cradle of the World.

Yet were these not all of the gigantic efforts required of a nation deemed to be in its decay. The Russians, sore pressed, called for aid, and to afford this was launched first the Gallipoli campaign, far to the south of Russia, and then the campaigns from Murmansk and Archangel, on the far northern coasts of that unhappy country.

Did others need succour and sustenance? Assuredly. And who alone could give it? The same old British nation. Thus, to succour the Serbians, yet another British Army had to go to Salonica.

That it may not be forgotten, let us then clearly state that during the Great War the British fought campaigns, all of which ended in victory, in France and Belgium, in Egypt and Palestine, in East Africa, in West Africa, and in South Africa;

in Mesopotamia ; in China, and the South Sea Islands. In Gallipoli and North Russia no tangible results were obtained, but they were nevertheless gallant endeavours, made to assist an ally in distress.

All these things were possible to only one nation on earth, and that nation was the British. Why ? Because she had a great heart, and a great Navy, and was mistress of the Seven Seas. Without the British Navy, the land forces of the Empire would have been as restricted in their operations, as are those of Switzerland.

At the end of the forty years of warfare all over the world, which ended when the " cease fire " sounded on November 11, 1918, the subaltern of 1878, looking back, had much of interest to notice and compare. In 1878 the British Empire was deemed to have reached its zenith. It was even then greater and more powerful than the Roman Empire, or those of Alexander the Great, or of Cyrus, King of Persia. By many it was deemed then to be about to follow the foreordained destinies of all great empires, and gradually to take its place with Rome, and Greece, and Persia, in the great historic past.

But history, as if tired of its own plagiarism, determined to be progressive, and to show still greater results.

In Asia, the kingdom of Burmah has been added to the British Empire, and in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Arabia, the paramount power is British. In Africa immense territories, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope, live under the Union Jack, or under the shadow of its rule. Millions of square miles of country and millions of people, aforesome enemies, now acknowledge allegiance to the King of England and live in peace under his sceptre.

Canada stretched out and acquired new territories, whilst hardy travellers to the North Pole and the South Pole planted the British flag on unknown lands. Islands of the Pacific were conquered by Australians and New Zealanders and added to the Empire.

Thus it may be judged that in forty years the British Empire has doubled itself in extent of territory, and in population it has increased by several millions.

The sun never sets on the dominions of the King of England, and in righteousness and justice does he reign over half the world.

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